

# Socialist Worker

For a socialist alternative to New Labour

80p

## PRESS ATTACKS ON GEORGE GALLOWAY

They lied about war and they're lying still

page 3

What's behind the panic over SARS

page 11

Elections: disillusion with Blair runs deep

pages 8 & 9

The British state colluded in murder

page 7

## Teachers are right to boycott damaging tests

TEACHERS STOOD up this week to the way the government's constant testing is destroying children's education and health.

The largest teachers' union, the NUT, moved to boycott the national SATs tests for seven, 11 and 14 year olds at its conference in Harrogate.

They are absolutely right.

The SATs were introduced by the Tories in 1992.

Since then they have caused huge levels of stress among children, helped to kill off creativity in the classroom and led to selection in education.

A survey last year by the Childline charity found the pressure of tests is one of the main reasons children as young as six suffer from stress.

*A staggering one in five primary school children now suffer mental health problems.*

All the evidence shows that far from improving pupil's education, compulsory national testing is doing immense harm.

Even the head of the privatised schools inspectorate Ofsted, David Bell, says, "I have a very real concern that the innovation and reform that we need in our schools may be inhibited by an over-concentration on targets."

The pressure to get children through the tests means teachers are driven to abandon every other area of the curriculum and "teach to the test".

A recent study in the *Times Educational Supplement* found that 11 year olds had got better at passing the literacy test but worse at actually reading books.

Revision aids for seven and 11 year olds now top non-fiction bestseller lists in outlets like WH Smith.

In many schools work on the tests, which children sit in May, begins the previous September.

Children in England are put through stressful tests virtually every year from the age of five and are now the most tested children in the industrialised world.

No wonder a survey by BBC Online found overwhelming opposition to the tests among parents.

■ See page 2 for more on tests.

# IRAQIS DEMAND AN END TO THE OCCUPATION

JAY GARNER arrogantly strolled into Baghdad this week.

Garner is the former general the US has put in charge of Iraq, but he was not hailed as a "liberator".

In Baghdad and across Iraq anger at the US occupation is increasing.

Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have taken to the streets to demonstrate.

They have carried banners

saying "No to occupation" and "Get out of our country."

Those people demonstrating suffered under Saddam Hussein and say they hated his regime.

But they also say they hate

the US occupation of their country.

In its war the US murdered civilians and turned parts of Iraq into rubble.

Now the so-called "liberators" guard the oil ministry,

while hospitals and homes are left with no power and no water.

And its troops have fired on and killed Iraqis who have taken to the streets to demand the US gets out of Iraq.

## U.S. 'LIBERATORS' FIRE ON IRAQI DEMONSTRATORS

see pages 4 & 5

## Clare Short's 'invisible hand'

LARE Short's Department or International development has awarded a 6.4 million contract to the right wing Adam Smith institute.

The contract was issued our months ago, but only recently uncovered by charities and unions.

The fanatical free market institute will "assist" the outh African government n privatisation work for hree years.

"We're appalled that the ritish government allowed ny taxpayers' money—let lone £6.4m—to go to what s a highly political rganisation like the ASI, hich is a free market think-ank that prides itself as a ioneer of privatisation," said Unison union spokesperson.

## Sugar barons' health 'crusade'

HE US sugar industry is sing blackmail and hreatening to bring the orld Health Organisation WHO) to its knees.

It wants the US Congress o stop funding the WHO nless it scraps guidelines on ealthy eating.

The industry is furious at he guidelines, which say hat sugar should account for o more than 10 percent of a ealthy diet.

The Sugar Association, ogether with six other big ood industry groups, has lso written to the US health ecretary, Tommy hompson, asking him to se his influence to get the HO report withdrawn.

## Working right over the edge

ONG WORKING hours re ruining people's lives.

A new survey has eaveled that working too ong is having a disastrous mpact on mental health in ritain.

Over 60 percent of the opulation are having ersonal problems because f working long hours, cording to the Mental ealth Foundation

In the last two years the umber of people working ore than 60 hours a week as rocketed from one in ight to one in six—the ighest level in Europe.

## Your pay is falling behind

E ARE getting poorer—nd that's official. Pay ackets were outpaced by he rising cost of living for he year ending in February.

Average earnings rose by .5 percent while inflation n goods in the shops rose y 3 percent.

Income has also been hit y rising national insurance nd council tax.



# Tests—could we do without them?

## SCRAPPING THE SATs tests would benefit, not harm, children's education.

That's the clear evidence from Wales, where the Assembly has scrapped the tests for seven year olds.

Over the last year inspectors, head teachers and various forms of assessment all point to rising standards in Welsh schools.

The Assembly has also scrapped

the league tables that rank schools according to their pupils' SATs results.

That enforced competition between schools is the central reason why SATs were introduced, and why the government refuses to abolish them.

League tables have led to a systematic attack on comprehensive education.

Schools in leafy suburbs unsur-

prisingly come top. Those in poorer areas are concentrated at the bottom.

Under New Labour's market system school funding follows pupils. So "unattractive schools" at the lower end of the league tables struggle to find pupils and get less money as a result.

This vicious circle means there is now a two-tier education system. A recent study of 31 countries

showed England had the sixth greatest difference in educational achievement between the most and least disadvantaged children.

Scrapping tests would be a huge blow to the government's entire divisive education policy.

It would make league tables impossible, and benefit millions of children's education.

■National Union of Teachers conference report—page 15.

## 'The rich don't want the SATs'

IN MY resources cupboard at school I have a video about Eton, which I use as a stimulus for discussion.

Once you've got beyond the silly clothes and barmy traditions, one thing smacks you between the eyes.

The quality of what is on offer is astonishing—high tech design equipment, satellite feeds for language teaching, vigorous contemporary progressive teaching in the arts.

And they do not have the SATs. No national testing for the sons of our rulers.



Toffs sit no SATs

Contrast that with the thin and measly fare of the lesson fished off the internet and delivered by a beleaguered supply teacher, which is the lot of many of our children.

If these tests were any good, make no mistake—the rich would have collared them for themselves by now.

We heard a speaker from the US teachers' union describe the "stack 'em deep, teach 'em cheap" approach over there and we all nodded our heads in acknowledgement.

This isn't a temporary local fault. It's part of a global strategy that divides all children into haves and have-nots.

By saying no to SATs we're saying no to that view of education and that view of the world.' JON BERRY, Hertfordshire

## Class in the classroom

POVERTY HAS a huge impact on how well pupils do at school.

New evidence presented last week shows that in the 100 schools with the highest number of pupils on free school meals only around 30 percent of students gain five

Cs at GCSE or above.

The situation is completely reversed in the 100 schools with the lowest number on free school meals. There 93 percent of students get five grade Cs or above.

□EDUCATION minister

Charles Clarke has been accused of bias after the schools in his Norwich constituency received a special allocation of £1.6 million.

This is the second highest allocation of funds for any education authority in the country.

# Don't give Brown credit on poverty

GORDON BROWN'S tax credit system has descended into chaos—a chaos which will mean some of the poorest people in Britain will not get money they desperately need.

If you only get £130 a week then the extra £30 from benefits is absolutely crucial.

Many people face huge delays before they receive the new child tax credit and working tax credit which came into force this month.

They are designed to give a small boost to low wage earners with children and to offset the costs of childcare.



Brown: mess

Chaos is built into a system where around 7 million people are supposed to apply for benefits through

complex and lengthy forms. Brown's budget figures last week assumed that one million people would not get the money.

Janet Fox from North London told *Socialist Worker*, "I have been ringing the helplines several times a day. They're always engaged or I'm kept hanging on waiting for someone. I never get the information I want even if I do get through.

"People I know have given up. I don't have any idea what I'll end up with at the end of it all."

## Figures finger police

BLACK PEOPLE are 27 times more likely to be stopped by police than white people.

That's the findings of new research into how the police use the powers they got under the 1994 Criminal Justice Act. The act was aimed at tackling football hooligans or illegal ravers.

Under this law the police can stop people even if they don't have reasonable grounds for suspecting them of anything.

According to the new research, by criminologist Ben Bowling of King's College, London, the power is 18 times more likely to be used against Asians and 27 times more likely against Afro-Caribbeans.

Professor Bowling said, "Wherever officers have the broadest discretion is where you find the greatest discrimination. That's where the problems in police culture affect the decisions that are taken."

## Court's asylum 'shame'

A HIGH court judge last week heard of a catalogue of violence and intimidation against a Kurdish refugee family sent to live on a Scottish housing estate.

Justice Moses said Britain was "shamed" by the attacks on the asylum seekers. He said no one could fail to sympathise with the Gezer family who were subjected to "undisputed social intimidation and violence".

The family of six were sent to the estate in September 2001 and were subjected to abuse and intimidation.

They escaped to relatives in London but were sent back by the Home Office who denied them vouchers and benefits to force them back.

Yet despite all this the judge refused to rule that the family should receive any compensation for their suffering.

## Revolt over NHS

THE government's plans for foundation hospitals were dealt another blow last week.

Jean Corston, the chair of the Parliamentary Labour Party, has told party whips she will not vote for legislation creating the two-tier hospitals.

Corston has a record of loyalty to Blair and was a parliamentary aide to David Blunkett.

Party whips have told Tony Blair to brace himself for the biggest backbench revolt any government has seen.

□A KEY London hospital has been plunged into a state of crisis by constant government pressure to modernise.

Doctors and administrators at St George's Hospital have been sacked, and are suing for unfair dismissal and libel. A former finance director at the hospital has made allegations of "creative accounting".

**Socialist Worker**  
Editorial: 020 7538 0828  
Circulation and business: 020 7538 3305  
National office: 020 7538 5821  
Industrial Department: 020 7987 1919  
All correspondence to PO Box 82, London E3 3LH  
Published weekly except final week of December. Published and printed by Larkham Printers and Publishers Ltd (TU all departments)  
■Registered as a newspaper with the Royal Mail

Socialist Worker is on the internet at [www.socialistworker.co.uk](http://www.socialistworker.co.uk)



# They lied about war and they're lying now

**THE WAR on Iraq was based on blatant lies, and the warmongers are still lying today.**

The pro-war press owners are trying to smear George Galloway MP and, through him, the anti-war movement.

Before the war Bush and Blair claimed they had documents that "proved" Saddam Hussein was about to develop nuclear weapons. They said it was absolutely certain that Iraq had tried to buy uranium from the African state of Niger.

The UN weapons inspectors showed that the supposed documentation was a crude forgery.

Blair's "carefully researched" dossier, released in February, was exposed as being cut and pasted together from a student's thesis. It was based on 12 year old information, and two magazine articles from 1997.

Bush and Blair still face strong opposition. How convenient it would be for them if they could find evidence linking the anti-war movement to Saddam Hussein.

Now the *Daily Telegraph* says it has discovered papers that show George Galloway "was in Saddam's pay". The *Sun* splashed the same story on its front page and pages inside.

George Galloway strenuously denies the allegations.

The Mariam Appeal, which features in the *Telegraph's* dossier, was founded to publicise the case of a four year old Iraqi girl who had leukaemia. It campaigned against the sanctions which led to over 500,000 child deaths.

In the murky world of supposed "secret revelations" there have been plenty of cases of forgery and distortion.

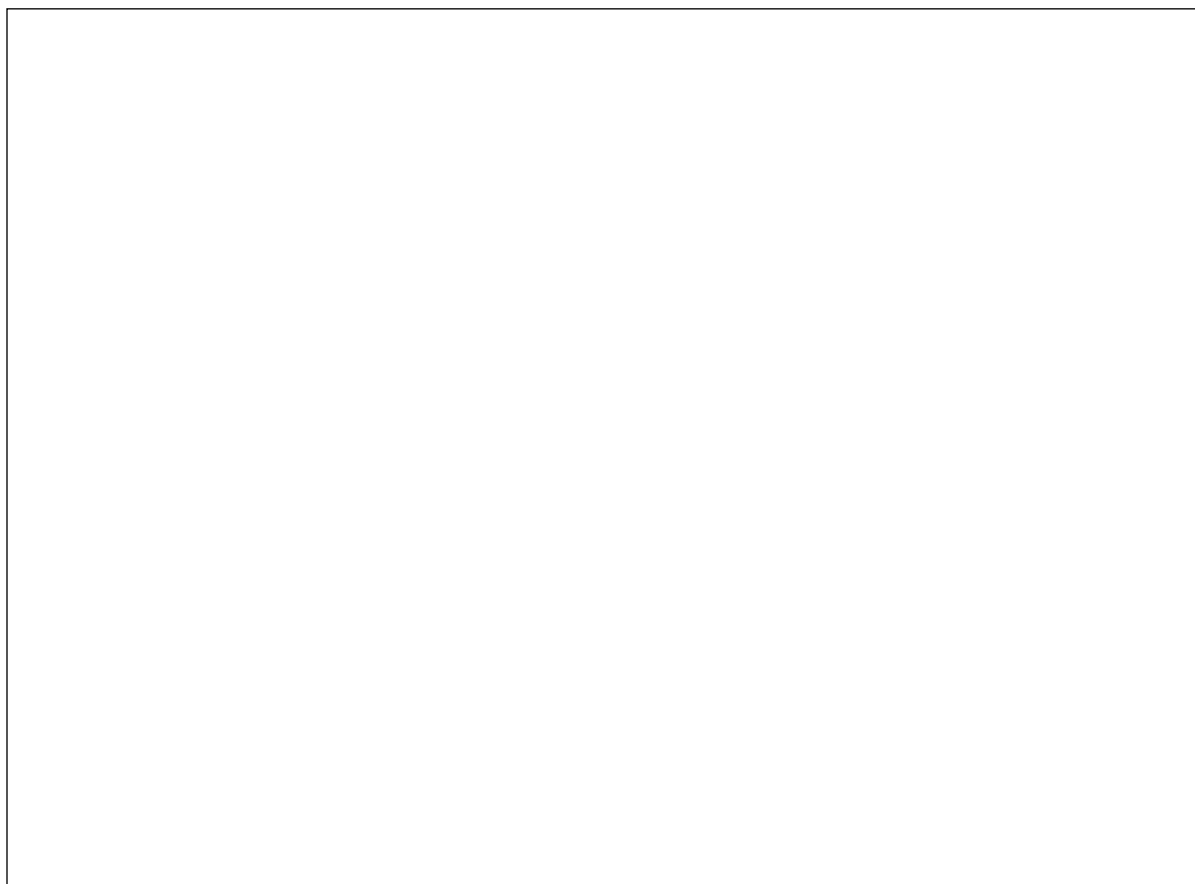
Even if every word the *Telegraph* alleges were true it still would not justify the paper's headline. The paper did not produce a shred of evidence that George Galloway personally ever received a penny from the Iraqi regime.

In the past press barons have used lies to witch-hunt those who stand up against the interests of the rich.

*Mirror* owner and pensions fraudster Robert Maxwell led the witch-hunt against miners' union leader Arthur Scargill in 1990 over allegations of "money from Libya".

Every mainstream newspaper went along with it. Politicians called for

## WORKERS' RESISTANCE IN ARGENTINA



TEN THOUSAND demonstrators fought off police attacks on workers from the Brukman tailoring factory in the Argentinian capital, Buenos Aires, on Monday night.

The factory was being run successfully under workers' control after the boss tried to close it down 16 months ago.

"They are afraid of us", said Celia Martinez, one of the 58 mainly women workers, "because we are showing that if we can run a factory we can run the country. This government is determined to get the working class out of the way and so decided to repress us."

A popular revolt overthrew a government which was implementing IMF attacks on living standards and jobs in December 2001. Since then the country's rulers have been trying to restore their power.

Their last attempt to do so, in June, was beaten back by massive demonstrations after they had shot dead three unemployed "piqueteros" activists. With a presidential election due this Sunday, they have decided to have another go at crushing the real opposition.

■ Brukman workers are asking people to send e-mails and faxes protesting at the repression to the Argentinian embassy. Messages of support to the Brukman workers will be passed on if sent to masarg@arnet.com.ar

Scargill to be jailed.

An independent inquiry by a QC cleared Scargill. Last year the *Mirror's* former editor said the smear campaign was a pack of lies.

The owners of the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Sun* will stoop to pumping out any lies to try to justify the war in Iraq.

Rupert Murdoch's empire includes the *Sun*, Fox News and the Project for the New American Century's own *Weekly Standard*. Conrad Black has the *Jerusalem Post* and the *Daily Telegraph*.

Fox and the *Post* both quoted unidentified Pentagon officials who said a factory in Najaf seized by the US on 24 March was producing chemical and biological weapons.

The factory did not contain any such weapons.

Conrad Black is a great admirer of US war criminal Henry Kissinger.

The *Telegraph's* editorial on Tuesday made it clear that its real target was the broader anti-war movement. It suggested the movement was "an ally of the Saddam regime" which "was prepared to divert money from hungry children in order to finance it".

This movement said the war was about oil and US power, that it would cause the death and injury of many thousands of Iraqi people and that it would not bring liberation. The movement has been proved right.

In villages, towns and cities across Britain ordinary people built a powerful movement in the face of pro-war propaganda and sneering from the vast bulk of the press.

Those networks of people are continuing. That is what really galls pro-war papers like the *Telegraph* and *Sun*, who have acted as Bush and Blair's little helpers during their slaughter in Iraq.

## 'I reject all these claims'

‘I HAVE never solicited nor received money from Iraq for our campaign against war and sanctions. I have never seen a barrel of oil, never owned one, never bought one, never sold one.

From the way these documents have been described to me, I can state that they bear all the hallmarks of having been either forged or doctored and are designed to discredit those who stood against the war.

They are part of a smear

campaign against those who stood against the illegal and bloody war on Iraq and against its occupation by foreign forces.

The idea that such documents have, as if to order, come to light just days after the massive assault on Baghdad, the looting and destruction of its ministries and government buildings and the chaos in the country, must be treated as highly suspect.’

Extracts from George Galloway's statement to the BBC



Campaigner: George Galloway has fought tirelessly against war on Iraq

**MAKE THURSDAY  
1ST MAY A DAY OF**

**PEOPLE  
POWER**

**AGAINST WAR,  
PRIVATISATION & RACISM**

**ASSEMBLE 12 NOON CLERKENWELL GREEN  
LONDON. MARCH TO TRAFALGAR SQUARE**

**CALLED BY LONDON MAY DAY ORGANISING COMMITTEE, GLATUC, TUC  
& GLOBALISE RESISTANCE [www.resist.org.uk](http://www.resist.org.uk)**

# 'We reject this foreign occupation'

*Day by day more and more Iraqis are seeing the US forces occupying their country as their enemy. There is mounting resistance against the troops which Bush and Blair promised would bring freedom*

## Ba'ath are back

●THE US and British governments promised they would remove the Ba'ath regime from power in Iraq.

But they are now re-employing known Ba'ath officials in positions of power and authority.

At least 2,000 Ba'ath Party police are back on the streets of Baghdad at the invitation of the US.

Minders from the information ministry who used to spy on journalists and monitor their reports are now offering their services as translators.

Bureaucrats from the oil ministry have been offered their jobs back.

## Where are weapons?

●NO WEAPONS of mass destruction have yet been found in Iraq.

Many politicians are beginning to ask why they were conned into believing that Iraq posed a real and immediate threat to the US.

Lindsay Hoyle, Labour MP for Chorley, voted in favour of the war. Last weekend he said, "We were led to believe that the Iraqis could fire these weapons within 45 minutes."

"If that was the case where have they vanished to? We were told there was hard evidence."

## Aid denied entry

●US FORCES refused the charity Save the Children permission to land a plane carrying medical supplies in northern Iraq last week.

The plane was loaded with enough supplies to treat 40,000 people including emergency feeding kits and supplies for hospitals.

Rob MacGillivray, the charity's emergency programme manager, said, "This lack of cooperation from the US military is costing children their lives."

●A UN food convoy coming to Baghdad from Jordan this week will carry 1,400 tonnes of wheat flour. Another supply line has been established from Turkey for the north of the country with trucks bringing in 3,000 tonnes of food.

The World Food Programme says that 480,000 tonnes of food will be required for Iraq each month but that it cannot find the £202 million it needs for providing emergency aid.

THE US is succeeding in uniting Iraqis in hatred of the invasion. On Friday of last week around 20,000 people left Baghdad's Abi Hanefah Nouman mosque. They marched through the streets waving Korans and carrying banners in Arabic and English reading, "Leave our country. We want peace".

A leading Sunni Muslim cleric accused the US of crushing Iraq on Israel's behalf and denounced the US military occupation as illegal.

He called for the unity of the country's Sunni and Shia populations to force out the US troops.

One protester told reporters, "We will give the American troops a few months to leave Iraq. If they do not then we will fight them with knives."

At the same time in the predominantly Shia Muslim northern suburbs of Baghdad around 50,000 people filled the streets surrounding the Al-Hikma mosque to hear a leading Shia cleric.

He said that a government "that allows Iraqis to say what they want but gives them no say in their destiny would be worse than that of Saddam Hussein".

# Country run by corporations

BUSH'S VISION of a "free Iraq" is of a country run by US corporations with its oil wealth in the hands of multinationals.

A \$680 million contract for Iraqi reconstruction was awarded to US engineering company Bechtel last week.

Bechtel has close links to Bush's Republican Party.

Chief executive Riley Bechtel has just been appointed to George Bush's export council.

Bechtel's senior vice-president, Jack Sheehan, is a member of a Pentagon advisory group, the Defence Policy Board.

George Shultz, secretary of state under Ronald Reagan and adviser to the pro-war Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, is also on Bechtel's board.

Over the last four years Bechtel has donated around \$700,000 to the Republicans.

Bechtel's contract

The Baghdad protests are fuelled by a burning sense of resentment against US forces.

They murdered thousands of civilians and destroyed residential areas during the first phase of the war.

They defended the country's oil ministry while failing to protect hospitals, colleges, museums and libraries.

There was still no water and electricity at the beginning of this week, but the US had imposed a strict curfew on millions of people.

Independent journalist Robert Fisk reports that the US troops are not making even the most elementary investigations to find the torturers and killers from Saddam Hussein's regime.

Instead the killing of civilians goes on. Last week US marines in a tank killed three people who were in the vicinity of a bank robbery.

The dead were not connected with the robbery in any way.

"Unfortunately we killed the good guys," said Lieutenant Patrick Spencer of the Marines 13/4 company.

"We found that out later, when we checked the bodies."

On Tuesday and Wednesday of last

week US marines shot down Iraqis in the northern city of Mosul. On the first day they killed at least ten. The next day they shot dead three.

The unrest in Mosul was sparked by two pieces of US arrogance.

## A new imperialism

Firstly the occupying forces hoisted the American flag on US military vehicles and over the city's municipal offices.

Secondly the US allowed Mishaan Al-Jubari to declare himself city governor. He is a pro-US former Republican Guard general who fled Iraq after he was accused of corruption.

As the bodycount grew in Mosul, a US soldier complained to the New York Times that the people were "not grateful".

Demonstrations against the invasion have spread through much of Iraq.

In Karbala, south west of Baghdad, a cleric told people, "We reject this foreign occupation, which is a new imperialism. We don't want it anymore. We don't need the Americans. They're here to control our oil."

In Kut, demonstrators spat at US troops and chanted "No Chalabi", referring to the man who may be installed as

Thousands of Iraqis demonstrate against US occupation in Baghdad on Friday of last week

Pictures: PA Photos/EPA

the US puppet in Iraq.

As the US held the first "talks" about self-rule with handpicked opposition groups, around 20,000 people protested in Nasiriya.

## Back 100 years

The most senior US military officer in Baghdad, Major-General James Mattis, promised that electricity would be restored by last weekend.

Instead, parts of the city which had some supplies over the previous few days found even they had been cut off.

Reporter Kim Sengupta writes, "Baghdad, whose public services were once of First World standard, has slipped back 100 years."

"As well as the lack of power, the telephone system has not worked for more than two weeks—since the Americans bombed the exchanges."

"Eleven days after US forces occupied the city and four days after their engineers were supposed to have begun working around the clock at the power plants, the lack of amenities is fuelling the anti-American feeling in the streets."

"They did the destroying, why can't they repair them?" is the most common question."

Around 30 Baghdad hospitals are closed because of looting and arson.

The three still functioning are reporting water-borne diseases.

General Mattis said the US military is helping the Iraqis. But at the Durah plant, which once supplied 30 percent of electricity for Baghdad, the US airborne regiments were there only to guard the premises.

The World Health Organisation has said the main hospitals in the northern city of Mosul had been looted and were operating at about 50 percent of capacity.

# 'They murdered our brother in war of rich'

JOSE COUSO PERMUY was a photographer shot dead by US troops in the Palestine hotel in Baghdad. Here is a statement read out by his brothers David and Javier, and his sister Barbara, at a recent anti-war demonstration in Madrid:

•DON'T TELL us, as the government does, that our brother died of an "unfortunate accident", that there were snipers and that he knew the risks he was taking.

Don't tell us, as the government does, that his death was exploited by the Iraqi regime, or that his death upsets public opinion and it is necessary to forget it.

They MURDERED our brother. So that there would be no witnesses. So that there would be no voices contradicting the Disney image of "intelligent" bombs, "humanitarian" wars and civilian deaths as "collateral damage".

In these sad days, we say that if they are capable of MURDERING an accredited journalist like our brother, in the

# Tanks roll over peace

THE ISRAELI government launched one of the largest military raids in Gaza since the start of the intifada.

This shows how contemptuously Israel regards the "road map for peace", lauded by Tony Blair.

Six people were killed and 48 wounded when armoured vehicles entered the Yibna district of Rafah in the south of the Gaza Strip. Among

middle of Baghdad in the eyes of the whole international community, what are they doing to civilians or those they regard as enemies who get in their way?

In the name of morality they are immoral. In the name of liberty they crush liberty. In the name of life they kill.

But there are worse. The minions, the accomplices, the yesmen, the campfollowers, the puppets, the buckpassers, the cringers, the well rewarded, who from this government look down on the people and ally themselves with the Empire.

In face of all this there are us, the lions who hold their heads up, THE PEOPLE.

We have come out on the streets, with our hands our fists, our cries, our songs, our tears, our wounds, our resistance, our courage. Today, Jose Couso, our brother, the people are with you, hating the war of the rich and knowing there is only one word to describe Bush, Blair and Aznar: MURDERERS."

the dead was a 14 year old Palestinian civilian.

The raid is a calculated sign from Israeli leader Ariel Sharon that there will be no let-up in military activity in the Occupied Territories.

More than 15,000 mourners waving rifles and Palestinian flags crowded the streets of Rafah to bury five of the dead.

## THE 'NEW' IRAQ

# New ethnic cleansing

THOUSANDS OF Arab villagers across central and northern Iraq are in fear of their lives as the war has unleashed ethnic cleansing similar to what happened under Saddam Hussein.

Some Kurdish groups are trying to reverse through violence the "Arabisation" process which drove them from their homes under the Ba'athist regime. Hundreds of people have already died in inter-ethnic clashes.

US forces have not made any attempt to stop the widespread expulsion of Arabs and Turkomans. Bush's method of dealing with issues through military power encourages people to copy the use of violence at the local level.

Near Daquq, 30 miles south of the oil-rich northern city of Kirkuk, more than 2,000 Arab villagers have been made to leave the land they have farmed for more than three decades.

# The man at the Hunting Club

AHMAD CHALABI is leader of the Iraqi National Congress and the Pentagon's choice to be president of Iraq.

After 44 years in exile Chalabi swept into Baghdad last week and installed himself in the Hunting Club, the notorious haunt of Saddam's loyal henchmen.

US troops ensured Chalabi was the first exiled Iraqi leader to return to Baghdad and they ensure he is well protected.

Despite Chalabi's hollow claims that he is not interested in running Iraq, one of his aides rushed to declare himself mayor of Baghdad last week. Chalabi brought with him a private army of Iraqi exiles, hailed as freedom fighters by the right wing press.

They have now been accused of lawlessness by the US troops. They have been seen stealing cars and trucks from hospitals in the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriya.

Chalabi himself was convicted of swindling £40 million from a bank in Jordan in 1989.

# DU: the US's deadly legacy

US AND British troops have dropped hundreds of tonnes of depleted uranium (DU) on Iraq. They have dropped some 2,000 tonnes on Baghdad.

DU is designed to be lethal. It can crash through the armour of a modern tank and it poisons land and contaminates water supplies for years causing cancers and genetic defects.

In 1991 the US forces dropped 340 tonnes of DU on Iraq and cancer rates rocketed. It became a standard weapon in the Balkans and in Afghanistan.

The Pentagon recently claimed it had no obligation to clear up the DU because it has not been proved to be dangerous. It quoted the Royal Society in Britain as backing its view.

The Royal Society was furious and immediately stated they believed soldiers and children to be particularly at risk from DU.

New research by the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute in the US has just revealed that even tiny amounts of DU can cause genetic damage in humans.

comment

# A chance to spit at Bush

THREE CHEERS for the protesters who gave Tony Blair and the other pro-war prime ministers such a hot time when they visited Athens for the European Union summit last week.

At the beginning of June George Bush will attend the Group of Eight (G8) meeting in the French city of Evian, just over the border from Geneva in Switzerland.

This will be an important vent for various reasons. First, and most obviously, it rings the conqueror of Iraq o Europe, the continent that aw the largest demonstrations against his war.

The summit will be attended by Blair, Bush's leading European toady, as well as he Italian prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, who despite is noisy pro-Americanism ept remarkably quiet in the ace of massive opposition to he war in Italy.

But also present will be he leaders of the three most important governments hich opposed war in Iraq— Jacques Chirac of France, he host country, Gerhard chröder of Germany, and ladimir Putin of Russia.

**In the past ten days all hree have been manoeuvring their way towards an ccommodation with the ictors in the Iraq war.**

There may still be flash-points over the Anglo-American occupation of Iraq. The ush administration wants to et sanctions lifted off Iraq and tart the oil revenues flowing ithout allowing United Nations inspectors back.

They can't be relied on to ind those mysterious missing eapons of mass destruction.

All the same, Chirac has roclaimed the summit the G8 of Peace". It's hard to athom how this is supposed o work given the presence of ush and Blair, who have just aged a war of aggression gainst Iraq—particularly even the threats that Washington has directed towards yria and Iran since the fall f Baghdad.

This hypocrisy will sicken nd anger the millions who ave taken part in the great nti-war demonstrations of he past few months.

**Evian will be the first ime the G8 has met in urope since the summit at enoa in July 2001.**

The huge protests there nd the police brutality that led o the murder of a young emonstrator, Carlo Giuliani, ere a landmark in the develpment of the movement gainst capitalist globalisation.

Since then the movement n Europe has developed considerably, in particular by onnecting its opposition to eo-liberal economic policies nd the domination of the ultinationals to resistance to ar and imperialism.

The G8 summit will be a urther opportunity for the ovement to bring all these ssues together. Anti-capitalist etworks in both France and witzerland have been meeting for months to plan protests.

Evian itself has been declared a red zone and will be losed to demonstrators.

The focus of the protests

## ALEX CALLINICOS previews the protest planned soon in Evian

will be the Swiss city of Geneva and the French town of Annemasse.

Bush arrives in Geneva on Sunday 1 June—snubbing Chirac, he will be staying in Switzerland. That same day a massive demonstration will be organised between Annemasse and Geneva.

Prior to the protests, an "anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian and anti-war village" and an "intergalactic village" are planned at Annemasse, where there will also be a "summit for another world" on 29 May.

Non-violent direct action of various forms will take place while the G8 meets between 1 and 3 June.

Switzerland has seen, proportionately, some of the largest anti-war protests in the past few months.

## Border

Demonstrators there have had to face brutal tactics by the police, who shot and badly injured a leading woman trade unionist with a plastic bullet at a protest in Geneva on 29 March. As a result, a senior police official had to resign.

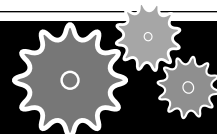
After a slow start, the anti-war movement in France took off with the demonstrations on 15 February. The organisers of the protests are insisting on a demonstration that takes place on both sides of the frontier, and are demanding that the authorities don't use border controls to block the entry of protesters.

A consensus is developing that the protests should focus on opposing the colonial occupation of Iraq. This is an issue that brings together all the concerns of the movement—opposition to the imperialist war machine and to the multinational corporations that are carving up the world and its resources.

It's clear, then, that Evian is set to become the next great rendezvous in the development of the anti-capitalist movement—joining such great names as Seattle and Prague, Genoa and Florence.

For those who have been active against the war here in Britain it will be an opportunity to pursue the butchers and occupiers wherever they gather. Along with protesters from the rest of Europe, we can show that every step they take will face massive resistance.

# inside the system



## IN THE FRAME



No. 7  
WILLIAM KRISTOL

**KRISTOL IS a key figure in the Project for the New American Century and architect of the Bush doctrine. He uses his magazine the *Weekly Standard* to promote his hard right views. His magazine only survives thanks to a massive subsidy from Rupert Murdoch. Kristol regularly graces the schedules of Murdoch's Fox TV station.**

## A very sticky privatisation

TUBE sell-offs came unstuck on London Underground two weekends ago.

Central Line tube trains were taken out of service in January following a near disaster.

The grand reopening lasted for just two hours. Dust fell from the walls of Tottenham Court Road station when it was cleaned by private company Tube Line.

The dust stuck to glue on the track, which is maintained by a second company, Metronet.

The glue was left after posters were put up by a third company, London Underground.

The dust heated up when trains began running triggering a fire alert in the rush hour.

## Auntie can't add up

THE BBC's *Six O'Clock News* reported the gathering in Baghdad as US soldiers pulled down a statue of Saddam Hussein on 9 April as:

"A momentous event", "a witness to history", "a day of extraordinary drama and historic images".

Here's how the BBC's *Newsnight* responded when two million people took to the streets of London on 15 February:

"The people have spoken. Or have they? What about the millions who didn't march?"

## Israel's killing zones

ISRAEL'S TOP court has authorised the use of tank shells designed to rip crowds of people apart.

These Flechette shells were sold to Israel by the US. Israel's supreme court decided that the weapons are compatible with the Geneva Convention.

# The super-rich who think war is a game

JAPANESE electronics giant Sony has patented the term "shock and awe" for a computer game.

Sony registered the term with the US patent office just one day into the war.

It wants to use it for computer and video games, as well as broadband games played over the internet by Sony PlayStation users.

The sick Sony game is just one of many attempts to cash in on killing.

The US is set to be flooded with goods ranging from T-shirts, toys, board games, sunglasses, mugs and fireworks branded with slogans such as "Operation Iraqi Freedom" and "Battle of Baghdad".



Gun play

A British company, SCi Games, has registered the title of a computer game called *Conflict Desert Storm II: Back to Baghdad*.

Anyone remember all those criticisms about Arabs teaching their children to glorify death?



# Donald ducks any scrutiny

SUPER-HAWK Donald Rumsfeld, US defence secretary, is using the immediate aftermath of the Iraq war to grant himself even greater powers.

He wants to be free to launch further attacks.

On Monday of last week he submitted a sweeping proposal to the US Congress.

The proposals were titled "Defence Transformation for the 21st Century Act".

The 204-page document presents a shopping list of demands.

Among these are plans to make it easier for Rumsfeld to spend more on the Son of Star Wars missile project, without being overseen even by Congressmen and Senators.

He also wants to end the requirement for the defence department to periodically

ONE GROUP of people unruffled by war in Iraq is the Iranian elite who left the country when the Shah was overthrown in 1979.

As half a million people demonstrated in Hyde Park on the Saturday after war started, across Park Lane at the Grosvenor House Hotel super-rich Iranians were gathering for a £140 a ticket gala ball.

Among them was David Khalili, the third richest man in Britain.

"We would never let a protest ruin a party," one Iranian socialite remarked.

"We were brought up on demonstrations in Tehran—people were always being killed on the streets."

## FIGURE IT OUT

# £60 thousand

THE AMOUNT prison authorities tried to charge for "board and lodging" to Vincent and Michael Hickey, wrongly imprisoned for 20 years for the murder of Carl Bridgewater

# US dropped poison

THE US army used far more chemical and biological weapons during the Vietnam War than it admitted at the time.

Between 1961 and 1971 weapons of mass defoliation were dropped on Vietnam to destroy food and shelter.

A new scientific study published in the magazine *Nature* last week showed an extra seven million litres of weapons like Agent Orange were sprayed on Vietnam.

Jeanne Stellman of Columbia University, New York, said, "The government position had always been that it was impossible to do a study because military records

weren't any good."

Stellman's report unearthed lots of material that had been classed as top secret in all earlier investigations.

Her report says, "Large numbers of Vietnamese civilians appear to have been directly exposed to herbicidal agents."

And the study goes on, "Other analyses carried out by us show large numbers of American troops were also directly exposed."

Campaigners have long argued that horrific deformities still being found among Vietnamese children were caused by US weapons.



## WHO SAYS?

"He was born with a golden plate in his mouth, so he is not hungry."

AMIR HUSSEIN school friend of Ahmad Chalabi, the Pentagon choice to run Iraq

"It's clearly a budget—it's got lots of numbers in it."

GEORGE BUSH on his budget

"The denial of economic reality that permeated Wall Street a few years ago has now migrated to Washington. Denial has become a ritual at the White House. What cloud are they on?"

JEFF MADRICK economics professor and *New York Times* columnist on Bush's budget

"Receiving the MBE was one of the proudest moments of my life—but I'm more sorry about the war."

LIZ NUNN MBE-winning charity worker who returned her award in protest at the war

"What was so moving, so deeply heartening, was that you totally understood the nature of Iraq and her people."

PRINCE CHARLES congratulates Colonel Tim Collins on his speech to British troops just before they took Basra

"They said the UN inspectors were bumbling idiots and can't find anything. Now these guys are looking like bumbling idiots that can't find anything."

DAVID ALBRIGHT former UN weapons inspector



Do you have a story for Inside the System? Send it to Inside the System, Socialist Worker, PO Box 82, London E3 3LH. All readers who send in a story that is printed are put into a monthly raffle for a book.

## New from Alex Callinicos AN ANTI-CAPITALIST MANIFESTO

Available from Bookmarks for the special price of £12.50 (normally £13.99). Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [www.bookmarks.uk.com](http://www.bookmarks.uk.com)



## Northern Ireland: Stevens report exposes

# Policy of killing then cover up



The RUC, British army, and security forces helped Loyalist murder gangs in Northern Ireland

## 'System worked as intended'

THE BRITISH state's collusion with Loyalist killer gangs, and the cover-up, was not just by a few rogue army and police officers.

It went right to the top. At the time of Finucane's murder the British intelligence service MI5 "had direct access to the army's secret files on a daily basis," the *Panorama* programme pointed out last year.

Nick Davies, author of a book on the Force Research Unit, *Ten Thirty Three*, claims that Brian Nelson's activities were regularly discussed at London meetings of the Joint Intelligence Committee.

This was chaired by Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

At Nelson's trial FRU commander Colonel Kerr admitted, "Brian Nelson's product and his reporting was passed through the intelligence community at a very high level, and from that point of view he has to be considered a very important agent."

The previous time British police had an investigation was the Stalker inquiry in the 1980s.

Stalker, a former deputy chief constable of Manchester police, investigated allegations of the shoot-to-kill policy operated by the

RUC police force.

He said senior police officers operated a policy of "deliberate assassination" and recommended their prosecution.

*Stalker was smeared, suspended and taken off the case, even though he was subsequently found to have done nothing wrong.*

As Pat Finucane's son Michael Finucane says, "The system worked exactly as intended, and in the British government's eyes it worked perfectly."

"The policy in Northern Ireland was about a government assassinating its own people."

The chief constable of

the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Hugh Orde, denies that collusion goes on today.

Yet in March 1999, a year after the Good Friday peace agreement, the solicitor Rosemary Nelson was murdered in circumstances remarkably similar to Finucane.

Rosemary Nelson was one of hundreds of lawyers who demanded an independent investigation into security force collusion in Finucane's murder.

She repeatedly complained of the harassment she received at the hands of the police, including death threats.

### THE BRITISH state is guilty of murder and terrorism.

That is the only proper conclusion to be drawn from Metropolitan Police chief John Stevens' report, which was published last week.

It uncovered state collusion with Loyalist death squads in Northern Ireland.

The government, army generals and their media cohorts have repeatedly claimed that Northern Ireland provides the blueprint for the British army's operations in the Iraqi town of Basra.

The Stevens report has exposed what that means—the state organising and covering up the murder of innocent people.

Stevens only published a 20-page summary of his 3,000-page report.

Nevertheless this summary confirms what relatives and campaigners, including *Socialist Worker*, have been arguing for years about Britain's dirty war in Northern Ireland.

It is the first official admission that the British army, the RUC (now renamed the Police Service of Northern Ireland) and the security forces helped Loyalist murder gangs in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

**A secret unit of the British Army, the Force Research Unit (FRU), along with the Special Branch of the RUC supplied names, addresses and photographs of Catholic targets to Loyalist paramilitaries.**

The key person supplying the fatal information was British army agent Brian Nelson. He infiltrated the Ulster Defence Association, the biggest Loyalist paramilitary group.

His information, says Stevens, was responsible for the murder of 30 Catholics.

These included many people who had no connection to the IRA, including the Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane.

He was murdered by the Loyalist Ulster Freedom Fighters (the death squad of the Ulster Defence Association) in 1989.

Two gunmen fired 14 bullets into Finucane's body as he was eating dinner with his wife and their three children.

One of his killers, Ken Barrett, confessed to the murder on a *Panorama* TV documentary last year. He said Brian Nelson had handed him information.

The Stevens report confirms Nelson's role and accuses the army and police of "widespread collusion" with Loyalist murder gangs.

**This included, "wilful failure to keep records, the absence of accountability, the withholding of intelligence and evidence, and the extreme of agents being involved in murder."**

Ministers, the Ministry of Defence and top police officers have done everything they can to cover up the truth.

Stevens says sections of the British army and the RUC "obstructed" the inquiry at every turn, including concealing crucial information and withholding documents.

Stevens' incident room and its documents were set on fire in what he calls "a deliberate act of arson".

One of the two guns used to shoot Finucane was stolen from an army barracks. The police returned it to the army who then modified it to destroy the evidence.

The Stevens report concludes, "The security forces sanctioned killings. Informants and agents were allowed to operate without effective control and to participate in terrorist crimes."

The government and British establishment are terrified that even more will come to light. They have denied the Finucane family the independent public inquiry they are demanding.

## The people involved

### Douglas Hogg

THE REPORT attacks the Tory former minister for comments that were "not justifiable" and says "the minister was compromised".

Just three weeks before Pat Finucane's murder Hogg, then a junior Home Office minister, repeated in a parliamentary debate the view fed to him by the RUC.

Hogg said, "I have to state as a fact, but with great regret, that there are in Northern Ireland a number of solicitors who are unduly sympathetic to the cause of the IRA." It effectively gave the green light to Finucane's murder.

### Colonel Kerr

HE WAS the commanding officer of the Force Research Unit, which organised the murders of Catholics by Loyalist killer gangs.

At Brian Nelson's trial Kerr told the court, "He wished to help the army in its attempts to counter terrorism and to save life."

The British establishment rewarded Kerr. He was promoted to brigadier and is today the British army's military attache in Beijing in China. He is one of the most powerful men in British military intelligence.

### Brian Nelson

HE WAS the army agent who passed names, addresses and photographs to Loyalist murder gangs.

Nelson was originally recruited by British military intelligence in the early 1970s, working inside the biggest Loyalist paramilitary group, the Ulster Defence Association (UDA).

In 1973 he was arrested after he and two other UDA members kidnapped a half-blind Catholic man, Gerald Higgins.

They electrocuted him by connecting him to a generator and burned his hair off. He died shortly afterwards.

Nelson got a seven-year jail sentence on grounds of "false imprisonment".

Kerr recruited Nelson to the Forces Research Unit in 1987.

Nelson became Director for Intelligence for the UDA and was directly in control of selecting Catholic victims for the death squads.

Nelson was also responsible for procuring a huge arms shipment from apartheid South Africa to be used by Loyalist killers.

Nelson was arrested and tried in 1992. But two counts of sectarian murder against him were dropped.

Instead Nelson got ten years for the lesser crime of conspiracy to murder.

Judge Brian Kelly, who had previously worked for the Unionist government before direct rule, praised Nelson and described him as a man who had shown "the greatest courage".

The Director of Public Prosecutions received a letter from Tory cabinet minister Tom King saying that Nelson was a valuable agent.

Nelson served less than half his sentence.

### Pat Finucane

THIS BELFAST solicitor represented many leading Republicans, including hunger striker and Sinn Féin MP Bobby Sands.

The report confirms that Pat Finucane was not an IRA member.

The British army and RUC hated him because he consistently exposed their sectarianism, bigotry and violence.

Just before his murder he had forced the RUC to release a prisoner who had been tortured.

He had also won a long-running case to force RUC officers to testify about their shoot-to-kill policy.







## AFTER THE ASSAULT ON IRAQ

# Syria: next country in Bush gang's sights?

**WHY ARE some of the leading figures who gather around President Bush talking about attacking Syria?**

After all, Syria voted on the UN Security Council last year to support the anti-Iraq Resolution 1441. It also sent 17,000 troops and 300 tanks to support the US in the war against Iraq in 1991.

However, for some of those involved in the Project for the New American Century, Syria is not a completely reliable ally. This is particularly important in the Middle East, a key part of the world because of oil and Israel.

Syria, at least verbally, stands up strongly for the rights of the Palestinians. When Tony Blair visited the Syrian leader, President Assad, just over a year ago Assad publicly defended Palestinian suicide bombers as “resistance fighters” and condemned civilian deaths in Afghanistan.

Assad has also not smashed the Hezbollah movement, which opposes Israel.

As a result, says the US State Department website, “The US continues to have serious differences with Syria. Syria has been on the US list of state sponsors of terrorism since the list’s inception in 1979.”

Last week President Bush said, “I think we believe Syria has chemical weapons,” the sort of chillingly offhand accusation which obviously cares nothing for facts but may one day be a pretext for war.

To understand the contradictions of the Syrian government and its relationship with the US it is important to look at its class base.

The ruling Syrian Ba’ath Party of Bashar al-Assad came to power in 1963 in a military coup. The Syrians were at first allied with the Ba’ath in Iraq but split from them in the 1960s.

The Ba’athists were based on middle class intellectuals, professionals, students, traders and businessmen who hated what imperialism had done to the region. It had imposed artificial boundaries, undemocratically imposed rulers, and divided people who spoke the same language from one another.

The Ba’athists were pan-Arabists, believing in a united Arab world.

They called for the nationalisation of major sections of the economy and opposing imperialism.

But once the Ba’athists came to power they were pulled towards identification with the state they had taken over, not some general concept of “the Arab world”.

This meant they soon became more concerned about the defence and extension of Syria’s boundaries and interests, not pan-Arab revolution or effective support for the Palestinians.

If there was ever a conflict between Syrian-state concerns and the rhetoric of anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism, it was Syrian state interests that won out.



The queen welcomed Syria’s president Assad and his wife to London five months ago. Assad also met Tony Blair. Now the US and Israel are complaining about the Hezbollah movement (left) Picture: PA Photos

power in the region.

In the 1967 war Israel defeated Syria and other Arab nations. Israel occupied Syria’s Golan Heights.

The Syrian government split over how to react. One section argued that the country should ruthlessly pursue its own security and not risk conflict through challenging Israel and the West.

When Jordanian forces massacred Palestinians in 1970 in what became known as “Black September” the Syrian government refused to use its air force to defend the Palestinians. Assad, the father of the present Syrian leader, took power soon afterwards in a coup.

Modern Syrian history has seen a continuing pattern of clashes with Israel, and rhetorical support for the Palestinians—

but then opposition to the Palestinians if Syria’s interests are seen to require it.

So Egypt and Syria launched another war against Israel in 1973 in an attempt to reclaim back their land.

But then in 1976 Assad sent Syrian troops into Lebanon during the civil war in 1976 on the side of vicious right wing Christian militias who were fighting against Palestinian and Muslim groups.

Assad’s forces collaborated with the Lebanese Phalangists in the massacre of 2,000 Palestinians at Beirut’s Tel al Zaatar camp in 1976.

But this record is not good enough for the people around Bush. They still want more subservience and more compliance with what Israel wants.

Matthew Cookson

### Analysis

#### Hezbollah is hated by the US because it resists

ONE OF the reasons that the US is putting pressure on Syria is that it wants the regime to stop backing the Islamist Hezbollah group in southern Lebanon.

The US and Israel claim that Hezbollah is a “terrorist” group and that Syria is a “sponsor of terrorism”.

In fact Hezbollah is a religiously-based resistance movement which developed out of the resistance of the Lebanese Shia Muslim groups to Israeli terror in south Lebanon.

Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 in an attempt to crush the Palestinian Liberation Organisation of Yasser Arafat which was based in the state. Many Shia welcomed the Israelis because of their dislike of the Palestinians’ dominance.

But they soon learnt that the Israelis were brutal occupiers.

After driving the PLO from Lebanon, killing thousands of civilians in the process, the Israeli army withdrew from much of Lebanon but kept a 15 kilometre “security zone” in the south.

It bombed villages, killed civilians and destroyed power plants.

For two decades the mightiest military power in the Middle East occupied the southern part of Lebanon at the cost of 20,000 lives.

For all that time Israel ignored a United Nations resolution ordering it to pull out.

Hezbollah emerged in the early 1980s as a response to the occupation. It developed mass support and became increasingly effective.

Three years ago the resistance spearheaded by Hezbollah forced the Israeli army to withdraw and Lebanese people rejoiced.

Tens of thousands of those driven from their villages, or who fled to the north, returned to see people and places for the first time in a generation.

The rejoicing went across the Middle East—in Syria, in the Gulf, in Jordan, in Egypt and in the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Hezbollah was popular in Lebanon because it took on the Israelis and also provided a rudimentary welfare network. It set up schools, hospitals and clinics.

It rebuilt houses destroyed by Israeli air raids, runs seminars for farmers on rebuilding agriculture, and has MPs in the Lebanese parliament.

Hezbollah’s victory is an example of the Arab people’s ability to resist imperialism, one that both the US and Israel want to neutralise.

Hezbollah continues to support the Palestinian resistance to Israel.

The US and Israel have tried to say that Hezbollah is linked to Al Qaida, although there is no evidence to demonstrate this.

### Links

Books to read on Syria and its role in the Middle East:

● *A Brutal Friendship: The West and the Arab Elite* by Said Aburish (£8.99).

● *Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War* by Robert Fisk (£10.99).

Both books are available from Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [www.bookmarks.uk.com](http://www.bookmarks.uk.com)

## The history shaped by imperialist intervention

WHAT IS now known as Syria was created by Britain and France after the First World War.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement carved up the region between them.

France took control of Syria and Lebanon. Britain took control of Palestine, Jordan and Iraq.

France imposed a landlord and merchant class as rulers in the new Syria.

There was a huge movement against French control which met heavy repression.

Syria won independence at the end of the Second World War.

The present government has met

resistance with severe repression.

It has put down seven anti-regime uprisings—in 1963, 1964, 1965, 1967, 1973, 1980 and 1982.

An Islamic uprising in the late 1970s and 1980s reached a crescendo in February 1982 when Islamists took over the city of Hama.

The Ba’athists sent in gunships, bulldozers and bombarded the city, killing at least 10,000 people.

Amnesty International reported, “Some monitors stated old streets of the city were bombed from the air to facilitate the introduction of military forces and tanks through the narrow streets, like the al-Hader street, where

homes were crushed by tanks during the first four days of fighting.

“On 15 February, after days of intense bombardment, the defence minister announced that the rebellion was put out, but the city remained under siege and surrounded.

“Door to door searches along with extensive arrests continued during the next two following weeks, while various news leaks talked about atrocities committed by the security forces and mass killings of innocent city residents.”

After 11 September 2001 Assad reminded the US of the way his government had acted in Hama and said it was a “successful example” for Bush

to follow.

Since the death of Hafiz al-Assad in 2000 his son Bashar has promised political and economic liberalisation known as the “Damascus Spring”.

But the repression of human rights and political activists continues.

There are hundreds of political prisoners in Syria and human rights groups say that torture is “routine”.

As in Iraq, the US will try to use repression by the Syrian regime to justify its pressure on the country.

But the US government does not speak out against the human rights abuses by its allies in the region, such as Egypt, Jordan and Kuwait.



# Paul McGarr

## What lies behind panic over SARS?

SARS. IN a few weeks the word has rolled around the world, bringing panic and fear.

SARS stands for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. By the start of this week it had killed at least 200 people in seven countries and infected thousands more. The World Health Organisation warns, "SARS could become the first severe new disease of the 21st century with global epidemic potential."

SARS seems to be a mutant form of the common cold virus, and probably originated in the Guangdong province of southern China.

The fear that haunts health experts is that it could spread like the flu viruses that have periodically erupted in the same part of the world.

In 1968-9 "Hong Kong flu" killed around one million worldwide, as did the 1957-8 "Asian flu" epidemic. These paled compared to the 1918-9 flu epidemic which killed up to 40 million people worldwide.

Flu normally lives in the stomachs of waterfowl, and is generally harmless. In southern China several thousand years ago farmers domesticated ducks, and used them alongside intensive rice farming. The ducks control rice pests, and fatten on leftover grains.

Domesticated animals such as chickens and pigs were raised in the same area. This created conditions in which the flu virus could shuffle between all these species. As it did so, like all viruses, it constantly mutated or changed form.

Pigs are much closer genetically to humans than ducks or chickens. A flu virus which mutates in a pig is more likely to then infect humans. The great fear with SARS is that a similar process has taken place.

But the fundamental reasons why any such disease spreads are social.

## Unsanitary conditions

In 1918 the world had been ravaged by the First World War. Poverty, hunger and disease of all kinds flourished. Great concentrations of men crowded together in filthy conditions in camps, troop transports and trenches.

This was where the flu epidemic took root and then spread. Elsewhere, as in India under the British Empire, famine ensured the disease killed hundreds of millions.

Today modern capitalism has made the spread of new diseases more likely.

Southern China is now one of the world's great economic powerhouses. It has been transformed in recent decades in ways reminiscent of Europe's cities in the industrial revolution of the 19th century.

Guandong is home to huge new cities, with millions forced to live in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. Often people are crammed slave-like into dormitories above ramshackle factories producing textiles, electronics and other goods for the world market. Sewerage and other public health measures are often non-existent.

Add to this often poor hygiene conditions in urban markets selling poultry, pigs and other food-stuffs, and you have ideal conditions for the emergence and spread of new flu-like viruses.

Business and profit have played their part in making the SARS outbreak worse.

China's rulers covered it up initially, fearing it could hit the flow of foreign investment in search of cheap labour on which the economy of southern China depends. And in today's "globalised" world air travel spreads diseases at a speed inconceivable in earlier decades.

SARS is unlikely to be the last new disease emerging from the chaos of global capitalism, which is also bringing back older diseases like TB, cholera and malaria. But the answers are relatively straightforward, and mean putting health before profit. That requires completely open information, which business considerations have blocked with SARS up to now.

Tackling insanitary, overcrowded living conditions, installing clean water and sewage systems, and proper public hygiene regimes are other key steps.

All of this was well understood by those who pioneered moves to tackle diseases like cholera in 19th century industrial cities in Europe.

If a tenth of what the world's rulers spend on weapons and war was put into such measures then SARS would remain a nightmare and not a threatening reality.

## MEDIA MONOPOLIES

# REVERSAL IN THE MIRROR

THE PAST few months have seen Tony Blair unshakably hold to the courage of his convictions.

"He is entitled to receive recognition of his single minded determination."

So ran the *Daily Mirror's* editorial on Thursday of last week. This is the same paper that during the early part of this year ran page after page which tore apart Bush and Blair's case for war.

It was brilliant coverage with top writers and great design.

*Mirror* editor Piers Morgan had decided that the paper should treat its readers seriously and not feed them a diet of trashy celebrity, scandal and sleaze.

The paper played an important role in popularising the anti-war cause.

Such campaigning journalism upset the top echelons of the Labour Party and worried Trinity Mirror, the media multinational which owns the *Mirror*.

Under pressure, the paper panicked.

In mid-March it had greeted news of Clare Short's submission to Blair with the headline "Cometh The Hour, Cometh The Coward... Revolting". On 24 March, four days after the war started, it was "Still Anti-War? Yes, Bloody Right We Are."

But then it began to falter. The *Guardian* published a poll on 31 March that showed 49 percent of *Mirror* readers supported the war with 38 percent against.

Such polls are notoriously unreliable but, according to industry insiders, "It sent a shockwave through the top ranks of Trinity Mirror."

"One executive screamed, 'We have to sell the paper in Birmingham, not Baghdad'."

The next day the *Mirror* still ran an excellent story on its front page "Slaughter—Women And Children Killed By US Troops". But by 3 April the front was "Routed—Republican Guard Divisions Defeated".

This continued with "Saddam Cheek" on 5 April (about Saddam Hussein taking to the streets of Baghdad) and, on 8 April, "Born



The *Mirror's* transition from anti-war to pro-troops

To Serve" (over a story of a British soldier who had been killed in Iraq).

The article continued, "He died in the Battle for Basra, aged 18. We questioned [note the past tense] why he was sent, but we would never question his pride, his honour, HIS COURAGE."

Inside pages dropped most of the anti-war coverage and either praised British troops or avoided issues by returning to trivia.

Of course the *Mirror* remained far better than its main rival, the *Sun*—which virtually ignored crimes like the massacres at the Baghdad markets.

### Murdoch's empire

But *Mirror* editor Piers Morgan now says that the paper's experience during the war was "an interesting lesson learned."

"It's entirely down to the natural sense in this country, particularly among the tabloid readership, that once a war starts, if we're involved, we must unequivocally support our boys and girls."

"I personally slightly misjudged the way you could be attitudinal on the front page once the war started."

Morgan says that Andy McNab, the former SAS man who writes for the *Mirror*, has helped him to

understand that "we slightly over-egged our anti-war approach".

In fact there is no evidence of *Mirror* readers departing in droves.

Morgan says the circulation fell by around 1.5 percent, hardly a slump.

In commercial terms it is nothing against the £20 million the *Mirror* lost through its decision to take on the *Sun* through price cuts.

But the knives are out for Morgan. Last week Sly Bailey, Trinity Mirror's chief executive, took over direct management of all the group's newspapers, including the *Mirror*.

A media analyst commented in the *Independent*, "She's taking control over Piers Morgan. She needs to keep an eye on him."

No such doubts affect the media's pro-war camp.

In the wake of the war Rupert Murdoch, *Sun* owner and head of News Corp, has decided to push Sky News right and make it more like Fox News in the US.

Asked by the *New York Times* whether Sky News had been imitating Fox, Murdoch replied, "I wish. I think that Sky News is very popular but it's just a rolling half-hour of hard news all the time." He doesn't like Sky's "liberal bias".

Fox takes a flag-waving, conservative line where US troops are always "heroes" and "liberators", and Donald Rumsfeld is regarded as a great thinker.

One example is the way it directly lobbied for the US military to blow up Iraqi TV in Baghdad.

Fox News's John Gibson wondered on 24 March, "Should we take Iraqi TV off the air? Should we put one down the stove pipe there?"

The next day the missiles smashed into Iraqi TV.

Sky News has already begun its transition by hiring the *Sun's* Richard Littlejohn to host a regular chat show.

Sky wants to be freed from the "impartiality and balance" rules which are supposed to be applied by the Independent Television Commission.

Murdoch says this will enable more choice and let alternatives to the left blossom as well.

In reality it is those with the money who will get the biggest voice.

Developments at the *Mirror* and Sky are a reminder of why we need a socialist newspaper which is not pushed around by the dictates of big companies.

Charlie Kimber

## BOOKS

# Understanding modern capitalism

Marxist Theory  
After Trotsky  
Tony Cliff  
£12.99 (introductory offer)  
Bookmarks

THIS IS the third volume of writings by Tony Cliff, a founder member of the Socialist Workers Party who died three years ago.

It includes his most important contributions to Marxist theory, which he developed in the decades after the Second World War.

Central was his analysis of

Stalin's Russia, reprinted here as the chapter "The Nature of Stalinist Russia".

In it, Cliff both amassed a huge amount of empirical evidence and returned to the classical ideas of Marxism to show that Russia was not some form of socialist or workers' state.

It was instead another form of capitalism—state capitalism.

It was a radical departure in the late 1940s when almost all the left considered Stalin's Russia some form of advance on Western capitalism.

This volume also contains Cliff's explanation of how the post-war boom in the West rested on unprecedented levels of arms expenditure.

These two pieces, taken together with his theory of revolutions in the Third World, amount to the foundations of an analysis of capitalism as a whole.

Other pieces include a chapter on the family from his book on women's oppression and previously unpublished notes on Marxist theory.

## INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM 98

The anti-capitalist movement and the war  
Sam Ashman

Crisis, revolt and the left in Argentina and Brazil  
Mike Gonzalez, Robert Saenz and Isidoro Cruz Bernal

Available from **Socialist Worker** sellers, price £3  
Or for £3.50 from ISJ,  
PO Box 82, London E3 3LH  
Phone 020 7531 9810

meetings, forums and events | tel: 020 7538 5821 | e-mail: forums@swp.org.uk

IF YOUR AREA ISN'T SHOWN PHONE THE NUMBER ABOVE

Big ideas in informal settings

Marxist forums

**BARNSELY**  
What can we learn from the Russian Revolution?  
Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Barnsley Central Library,  
Shambles St.

With Ronnie Steele

**BATH**  
The grand strategy of the American Empire  
Sun 27 Apr, 4pm,  
Friends Meeting House, York St.

**BIRKENHEAD**  
Can people power topple Blair?  
Tue 6 May, 7.30pm,  
Oxton Green Community Centre,  
Christchurch Rd.

**BIRMINGHAM SPARKHILL**  
Martin Luther King and the politics of civil disobedience  
Thu 24 Apr, 7pm,  
Shahenshah Restaurant,  
Ladypool Rd.

**BLACKWOOD**  
Martin Luther King and Malcolm X  
Mon 28 Apr, 7.15pm,  
Blackwood Miners Institute.

**BRIDGEND**  
Is this the best democracy we can get?  
Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Evergreen Hall, Angel St.

**BRIGHTON**  
The Project for the New American Century  
Thu 8 May, 7.30pm,  
Phoenix Community Centre,  
Phoenix Place.

**BRISTOL MONTPELIER**  
What ideas do we need to change the world?  
Thu 24 Apr, 7pm,  
Bristolian Cafe, Picton St.

With Huw Williams

**BURNLEY**  
Blood and oil: the real history of the Middle East  
Thu 24 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Shalamar Indian restaurant.

**CAMBRIDGE**  
Can capitalism be replaced?  
Thu 1 May, 7.30pm,  
CB2 Cafe, Norfolk St.

**CANTERBURY**  
Blood and oil: the real history of the Middle East  
Thu 24 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Pascucci Cafe, High St.

**CHELTENHAM**  
Vietnam: when the US was humbled  
Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm,  
HC207, Francis Close Hall,  
St Paul's Rd.

**CHESTERFIELD**  
Advertising the body: why sexism sells  
Wed 7 May, 7.30pm,  
Market Halls,  
Market Square.

**COLCHESTER**  
Crime, drugs and antisocial behaviour  
Mon 5 May, 8pm,  
RAD Hall (cnr Walsingham Rd/  
Southway).

**COVENTRY**  
Weapons of mass deception: does the media control our ideas?  
Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Methodist Central Hall.

**DARLINGTON**  
What would socialism look like?  
Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Larchfield Centre,  
Larchfield St.

**DUDLEY**  
Blair's democracy or ours?  
Wed 7 May, 7.30pm,  
Claughton Green Community Centre,  
Blowers Green.

**GATESHEAD**  
What can we learn from Lenin and the Russian Revolution?  
Tue 6 May, 7pm,  
Trinity Centre,  
Gateshead High St.

**HARTLEPOOL**  
What can we learn from Lenin and the Russian Revolution?  
Wed 7 May, 7pm,  
Hartlepool Library, York Rd.

**HARWICH**  
What is the grand strategy of the US Empire?  
Wed 30 Apr, 8pm,  
Longmeadow Community Centre.

**HEXHAM**  
Che Guevara: more than a revolutionary icon?  
Wed 30 Apr, 7pm,  
Hexham Swimming Pool.



Nikos Loudos writes, "Trade unions and the anti-war movement 'welcomed' European Union leaders to Athens on Wednesday of last week. The Greek TUC and the General Civil Servants Union called for a four-hour general strike to build the protest. The government responded with heavy repression, and the centre of Athens was filled with thousands of police. But despite this Syntagma Square (just a breath away from the EU leaders) was taken over by demonstrators. Protests took place at the same time in every major Greek city. The main slogans in Athens were 'Bush, Blair, Berlusconi—you are the terrorists and the killers', and 'Blair, Blair we know you, along with Bush you kill children in Iraq'."

**HUDDERSFIELD**  
Is this the best democracy we can get?

Thu 1 May, 6pm, Coffeerevolution (cnr Church St/Wood St).

**HULL**  
Does the media control our ideas?

Thu 1 May, 7.15pm, Avenues Adult Education Centre, Park Avenue.

**IPSWICH**  
Palestine: can it ever be free?

Sun 27 Apr, 7.30pm, CAB, Tower St.

**KETTERING**  
Blood and oil: the real history of the Middle East

Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm, Sadani, Lower St (opp main post office).

**LANCASTER**  
Blood and oil: the real history of the Middle East

Wed 7 May, 1pm, Livesey House, University of Central Lancashire.

**LEEDS BEESTON**  
Blood and oil: the real history of the Middle East

Thu 24 Apr, 7.30pm, Tunstall Road Community Centre.

**LEEDS CITY CENTRE**  
Fascism: how can it be stopped?

Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm, Swarthmore Centre (next to Park Lane College).

**LEEDS HAREHILLS**  
If money and missiles can cross borders, why can't people?

Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm, Pakistani Community Centre.

**LEEDS HEADINGLEY**  
Are women equal today?

Thu 1 May, 6.30pm, Delikatessen, Hyde Park Corner.

**LEICESTER**  
How do we fight fascism?

Mon 28 Apr, 7.30pm, Cafe Mozart, London Rd.

**LIVERPOOL AIGBURTH**  
Does the media control our ideas?

Wed 7 May, 7.30pm, Collect Gallery, Lark Lane.

**LIVERPOOL CITY CENTRE**  
How do we defeat the Nazis?

Wed 30 Apr, 7.15pm, Quynh's Cuisine, Bold St.

**LIVERPOOL TOXTETH**  
Martin Luther King and the politics of civil disobedience

Thu 24 Apr, 7.30pm, Yemeni Community Centre, Lodge Lane.

**LOWESTOFT**  
How do we get a world without war?

Thu 1 May, 7.30pm, Havelock, Love Rd.

**LUTON**  
Blood and oil: the real history of the Middle East

Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm, Hightown Recreation Centre, Old Bedford Rd.

**MANCHESTER HULME**  
Does the media control our ideas?

Mon 28 Apr, 7pm, Arch Bar, Stretford Rd.

**MANCHESTER LEVENSHULME**  
Will the Arab world revolt?

Thu 24 Apr, 7.30pm, Sultan Cafe, Stockport Rd.

**MIDDLESBROUGH**  
What can we learn from Lenin and the Russian Revolution?

Thu 8 May, 7.30pm, St Mary's Community Centre.

**MILTON KEYNES**  
Is revolution possible?

Sat 10 May, 2.30pm, YMCA, 402 North Row.

**NEWCASTLE HEATON**  
Does the media control our ideas?

Thu 8 May, 7pm, Truick Road Community Centre.

**NEWCASTLE WEST**  
Malcolm X and the fight against racism

Thu 15 May, 7pm, Lynwood Business Centre, Lynwood Rd.

**NEWPORT**  
What could real democracy look like?

Tue 29 Apr, 8pm, Usk Room, Newport Centre.

**NORTHAMPTON**  
Blood and oil: the real history of the Middle East

Thu 24 Apr, 7pm, Cafe Msaada, Kettering Rd.

**NORWICH**  
Does the media control our ideas?

Thu 8 May, 7.30pm, Millennium Library, city centre.

**NOTTINGHAM ST ANN'S**  
The grand strategy of the American Empire

Thu 1 May, 7.30pm, Chase Neighbourhood Centre, Robin Hood Chase.

**NOTTINGHAM SNEINTON**  
What will a revolution look like?

Thu 24 Apr, 7.30pm, Sneinton Hermitage Centre, Sneinton Boulevard.

**OXFORD EAST**  
Can Palestine ever be free? Eyewitness account

Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm, East Oxford Community Centre, Cowley Rd.

**PENDLE**  
If money and missiles can cross borders, why can't people?

Wed 7 May, 7.30pm, Marmaris Turkish Restaurant, Manchester Rd.

**PLYMOUTH**  
The grand strategy of the American Empire

Mon 28 Apr, 7.30pm, Martinsgate Education Centre, Bretonside (behind Staples).

**PRESTON**  
Martin Luther King and the politics of civil disobedience

Tue 29 Apr, 7.30pm, Unity Community Centre, Shepherdt St (off Church St).

**ROCHESTER**  
If money and missiles can cross borders, why can't people?

Thu 8 May, 7.30pm, Eon Internet Cafe, High St.

**ST ALBANS**  
Blood and oil: the real history of the Middle East

Mon 28 Apr, 7.30pm, Trinity Church, Victoria St.

**SHEFFIELD SHARROW**  
Why is there a war on asylum seekers?

Thu 24 Apr, 7.30pm, Highfields Library, London Rd.

**SOUTHAMPTON**  
Weapons of mass deception: does the media control our minds?

Thu 1 May, 8pm, Cook House, St Mary's St.

**SOUTHEND**  
Do movements need political parties?

Thu 24 Apr, 7.30pm, Coffee House, Chichester Rd.

**WALSALL**  
Lenin: what can we learn from a man who made a revolution?

Wed 14 May, 7.30pm, Palfrey Community Centre.

**WATFORD**  
Blood and oil: the real history of the Middle East

Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm, New Trade Union Hall, Wickford Rd (opp Junction bus stn).

**YORK**  
Is this the best democracy we can get?

Wed 30 Apr, 8pm, Priory Street Centre.

With Damien Dunn

**FORUMS IN LONDON**  
**BAYSWATER**  
Somalia: the failed US intervention

Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm, Coffee Island, Westbourne Grove.

**BRENT**  
Does the media control our ideas?

Mon 28 Apr, 7pm, Willesden Green Library Centre, High Rd, Willesden.

**BROMLEY**  
Weapons of mass disinformation: the media and war

Mon 28 Apr, 7pm, United Reformed Church.

**CAMDEN**  
Blood and oil: the real history of the Middle East

Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm, Marlina's snack bar, 87 Camden High St (opp Argos).

**CLAPTON**  
Does the movement need political parties?

Thu 24 Apr, 7.30pm, Gulluoglu Bakery, Lower Clapton Rd.

**CROUCH END & MUSWELL HILL**  
Is this the best democracy we can get?

Thu 24 Apr, 8pm, Hornsey Vale Community Centre, Mayfield Rd.

**DALSTON**  
Is this the best democracy we can get?

Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm, Centerprise, Kingsland High St.

**EALING**  
Martin Luther King and the politics of civil disobedience

Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Woodville Rd.

With Martin Smith

**EAST HAM**  
Is revolution possible?

Thu 8 May, 6.30pm, Lahore Grill, High St North.

**ELEPHANT & WALWORTH**  
Blood and oil: the real history of the Middle East

Thu 24 Apr, 7.30pm, Pullens Centre, 184 Crampton St.

**HOUNSLOW**  
Is socialism possible?

Wed 30 Apr, 7.30pm, Hounslow Community Centre, Montague Rd.

**ILFORD**  
Is a world without war possible?

Thu 8 May, 7.30pm, Kohi-Noor, Ilford Lane.

With Michael Bradley

**LADBROKE GROVE**  
Do Western workers benefit from Third World oppression?

Tue 29 Apr, 7.30pm, Green Room, Paddington Arts Centre, Woodfield Rd.

**LEWISHAM**  
Palestine: can there be a road map to peace?

Wed 14 May, 7pm, Hunkarim, Lee High Rd.

**LONDON FIELDS**  
Palestine: is there a road map to peace?

Thu 24 Apr, 7.30pm, Pasta Casa, Broadway Market.

**RICHMOND**  
Is revolution possible?

Thu 1 May, 8pm, Etna Centre, 13 Roslyn Rd.

**STAMFORD HILL**  
Is this the best democracy we can get?

Thu 1 May, 7.30pm, Cyprus Cafe (cnr Manor Rd/Stamford Hill Rd)

**STOKE NEWINGTON**  
Why is Blair backing Bush?

Wed 7 May, 6.30pm, downstairs, Bodrum Cafe, Stoke Newington High St.

**VICTORIA PARK**  
Is this the best democracy we can get?

Mon 28 Apr, 7.30pm, Mojo's, 132 Lauriston Rd.



**INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION**  
The workers create all the wealth under capitalism. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

**REVOLUTION NOT REFORM**  
The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown.

**THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD**  
The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

**INTERNATIONALISM**  
The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country. In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbians and gays.

**THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY**  
To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

Join the socialists

Fill in this form and send it to  
PO Box 82, London E3 3LH

Name	E-mail
Address	
Postcode	
TU/college/school	Phone



# Letters@socialistworker.co.uk

SEND TO PO BOX 82 LONDON E3 3LH | PHONE 020 7538 0828 | FAX 020 7538 0140



Irene Stanley (centre) has tirelessly campaigned for justice after the death of her husband, Harry

## How we made gains in our battles for justice

CTIVISTS IN Burnley were celebrating last week after the court of appeal halved the sentences of five Asian men jailed after the Burnley "riots".

The defendants had taken to the streets to defend their areas from a Nazi attack 18 months ago.

At the trial last November the all-white jury accepted that the defendants had acted in community self-defence and returned "not guilty" verdicts on the major charges.

However, they were found guilty of one charge—running down motorists (and passing) police lines, and of banging windows on the local

pub where the Nazis used to drink.

On the CCTV evidence this event took just over one minute.

The guilty verdict on this count was the green light Judge Boulton needed to inflict vicious sentences on the five.

Throughout the trial Judge Boulton made it clear that he did not accept the self-defence plea.

The jury decision, and now the appeal court decision, emphasises how wrong he was.

The appeal court ruling is a reflection of the campaign fought by the defendants, their lawyers and the community in Burnley for justice.

Although they should never

have been imprisoned in the first instance, the decision is a victory. It means that some of the young men have been released and others will get out over the next two months.

It is a boost to anti-racists everywhere in the run-up to the May elections. Michael Lavalette Preston

● IRENE Stanley, widow of Harry who was shot dead by a member of an armed response unit in 1999, was in the courts of justice last week.

This was for a judicial review of

the inquest into Harry's death, held at St Pancras coroners' court last June.

The judicial review is not complete until mid-May when the final ruling will be made, although the judge has indicated that he will be granting a new inquest.

It is not a complete victory for the Stanley family.

But it does show that if you are prepared to fight like Irene has then it is not so easy for the police to get away with it.

Keep up your support. Contact the campaign on 07931 844 969. Terry Stewart London

## How police tried to stop marchers

HOSE OF us travelling from the north of England to attend the recent anti-war demonstration in London and our journey made deliberately difficult by the Metropolitan Police.

The Chesterfield contingent were unable to reach each the designated start point for those from the north, and were forced to begin marching at Marble Arch.

A large group of northern protesters, including the Sheffield and Nottingham groups, marched through Hyde Park, the site of the rally for the end of the demonstration.

After a number of diversions and hold-ups a large police force totally topped our progress on the south side of Hyde Park.

Breakaway groups of

around 25 individuals managed to breach this aggressive wall of police before reinforcements arrived.

The major body of the group was penned in and our breakaway group was isolated.

The decision was then taken by the small group to block the road next to the police line forcing them to break the wall.

Thankfully the police wall collapsed and the march successfully progressed to Parliament Square.

I believe that the hostile, aggressive nature of the Metropolitan Police highlights the intolerance and fear that the ruling powers felt towards the huge anti-war movement. Liam Hawkins Chesterfield

## Anti-war mood seen in India

ANTI-WAR protests happened on a daily basis all across the Indian subcontinent from the beginning of the US and British invasion of Iraq.

People queued in the streets to punch and burn effigies of George Bush and shout strong anti-US slogans.

Major protests took place in Kashmir, Bombay, New Delhi, Jaipur and Bangladesh. Each demonstration attracted crowds of between 40,000 and 50,000 people.

Police used heavy-handed tactics to disperse the protesters.

They have used tear gas or opened fire with live rounds, as happened in Srinagar.

There is also some anger at the Indian prime minister A B Vajpayee, for sitting on the fence and refusing to condemn US and British aggression.

About 60,000 Indian workers were sent home from the Gulf just days before the invasion.

Indian workers are a cheap labour force and work in many Gulf states, particularly Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

For many poverty-stricken families it is the chance they have to feed and clothe themselves.

Bush and his poodle Blair have plunged this country and the lives of many ordinary Indians into chaos. Barry Donnan by e-mail

## Wrong on Ward

I WAS alarmed by the suggestion (*Socialist Worker*, 5 April) that postal workers should elect Dave Ward as CWU deputy general secretary.

His victory would be a defeat for the left. He is probably the weakest ever negotiator to hold a national position in the union.

Your article also misses the point about the current London weighting dispute. By submitting a unilateral pay claim the union's London division has fallen into the trap of regional pay bargaining which the employer has wanted for decades.

Everybody recognises the drawbacks with his opponent John Keggie. But it's unfair to suggest that he is to the right of Ward in this election. Paul Glenholmes CWU Birmingham branch

## YOUR VIEW ●●●

### Make more of the web

GROUPS LIKE yourself could make far more use of the internet.

Your website could produce an A4 poster for anyone to print off and distribute in their area. There could be an advert for your newspaper for those who wish to read the reports in greater depth.

An article in your paper prompted me to write this. A French cameraman claimed American soldiers in Iraq deliberately shot at the vehicle he was travelling in.

The only word of this incident to my knowledge comes from your newspaper. Producing a poster would have spread that news to a much greater number of people. Supporter

### US is biggest peace threat

TONY BLAIR—you said there were "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq. Yet no evidence exists for you to prove that.

We have all seen the weapons of mass destruction—of the US. You bomb and kill for "peace and democracy" creating a second Vietnam and uniting the whole Arab world against the West. David MacDonald Leigh

### Rumsfeld won't KO the DU

WHY IS the Pentagon refusing to clear up depleted uranium (DU) weapons it has been using in Iraq?

It claims DU has no long term effects. But a



DU victims in Bosnia

United Nations report found DU was still contaminating water and air in Bosnia seven years after the US used it.

DU has been linked to high levels of cancer in Iraq and to Gulf War syndrome amongst troops.

Joanne Ball London

### Victims they're trying to hide

THE REAL horror of the war on Iraq has been censored.

The BBC's producers' guidelines say, "We should be circumspect about pictures of and accounts of injured, dying and dead combatants."

"Pictures should not normally be close up and

should not linger too long." This means we see the weapons of war, but not the results. War becomes sanitised. SW reader

### Pumping out Propaganda

SOME PEOPLE now think that the BBC stands for the Blair Broadcasting Corporation because of their pumping out of government propaganda during the war in Iraq.

The BBC, as the state broadcaster, is expected



Getting message across

to represent the ruling class views in times of war. The solution must be independent broadcasters who are free to constantly question the propaganda and investigate so we are told the truth. David Deakin West London

### The freedom to get shot

HOW MANY times did the government tell anti-war protesters that Britain and the US were invading so Iraqis could enjoy the same freedom as us to demonstrate?

Now we read that US troops have shot dead at least seven civilians at a demonstration in the Iraqi city of Mosul.

Iraq's overflowing hospitals are struggling to care for children with horrific injuries, while thousands of ordinary people have lost their homes or are terrified to go out because of looting and violence.

Bush and Blair should be ashamed to call this freedom.

Hannah Bayman Southampton

### Ogres that rule today

FOLLOWING the butchery in Afghanistan and Iraq, it would be great if Auden's "August 1968" became more known.

It was written to condemn the Stalinist liquidation of the Czechoslovakian uprising of that year, but it fits today's "Ogres" just as well:

"The Ogre does what ogres can/Deeds quite impossible for Man/But one prize is beyond his reach/The Ogre cannot master Speech."

"About a subjugated plain/Among its desperate and slain/The Ogre stalks with hands on hips/While drivels gushes from his lips."

Sasha Simic London

## In brief

### Union activist needs support

ACKNEY COUNCIL in east London is pressing ahead with disciplinary action against Union union branch officer John Page.

In December 2002 Hackney Council suspended Union branch officers John Page, Brian Debus and Will Leng after they raised concerns about racism in a draft report to the council.

All allegations against Will have been dropped, and the allegations against Brian have been reduced. John Page, however, still faces dismissal.

A ballot for industrial action is due to begin in the next week.

■ **Lobby John Page's hearing, Friday 25 April, 9am, Christopher Addison House (behind Hackney Town Hall).**

### A weekend of solidarity

THE FIGHT to stop the privatisation of water, electricity and telephone services in the city of Cali, Colombia, is coming to a head again.

The Sintraemcali union, which has been at the heart of the fight to stop privatisation, works in an atmosphere of persecution.

The fight to build solidarity with the Sintraemcali struggle, and the wider resistance in Colombia will be one of the themes of a weekend of solidarity meetings and conferences in London this weekend.

■ **Colombia Solidarity Weekends this Saturday and Sunday, 26-27 April. For more details of meetings and conferences e-mail colombia\_sc@hotmail.com**

### Hungry for alternative

OVER 25 people, including school and college students, attended an anti-war meeting in Honor Oak in Lewisham, south east London, on Wednesday of last week.

The discussion went on after 10pm with people hungry for an analysis of war and imperialism. This was one of the most exciting political meetings we have experienced in the area.

MAGGIE PALMER and PAUL SUMMERS

### Protesting to stop the sell-off

ROUND 50 people marched through Hounslow in west London on Tuesday of last week. They were protesting against the New Labour council's decision to privatise the home care service.

The Union union organised the demonstration. Protesters lobbied councillors as they went into their meeting. The event comprised home carers, service users and supporters.

Further protests are planned. **UNISON MEMBER**

### Narrow 'yes' to political fund

LEADERS OF Prospect, the union for civil servant scientists, specialists and managers, breathed a huge sigh of relief at the result of their political union ballot.

Prospect members voted 1,537 to 21,403—a majority of just 134 in favour of establishing a political fund, in a high 41 percent turnout.

The union leadership and activists argued for a yes vote to enable the union to undertake political campaigns against privatisation and job cuts.

PROSPECT MEMBER

## Journalists



JOURNALISTS IN the NUJ union are stepping up their fight against the US-owned Gannett newspaper publisher, which owns Newsquest.

They are striking for better pay.

Bradford Newsquest strikers went back onto the picket line from Wednesday of last week.

NUJ members are out for

12 days until Sunday this week.

Union members struck on Wednesday and Thursday of last week at the Bolton Evening News (above) and Bury Times, owned by Newsquest Lancashire. This was their second two days of strike action.

Strikers in Bolton began an all-out strike on

Tuesday of this week. PHIL TURNER

■ **Strikers urgently need cash to sustain the dispute. Send money to NUJ Manchester at NUJ, Fifth Floor, Arthur House, Chorlton Street, Manchester M1 3FH. E-mail messages of support to bradfordnuj@yahoo.co.uk and for Bolton and Bury to thomsonfamily20@cwtnet**

Picture: Richard Rolton

## Rail workers

# Guards solid for our safety

OVER 3,000 guards on 12 train operating companies struck on Thursday of last week in the third day of action over safety called by the RMT union.

The strike was again solid and highly effective, despite coordinated attempts by train companies, including those not involved in the strike, to use managers to scab.

The RMT executive was to meet on Tuesday of this week to consider calling further strike dates.

It is also looking at how to up the political profile of the dispute. The government, through the Strategic Rail Authority, is backing the companies that are most prepared to

put profit before safety.

"Whenever anyone hears about what our strike is about", one guard on the Virgin West Coast line told *Socialist Worker*, "they support us."

"The level of support for the strike among RMT members is great. We know we are in a serious battle and the question is about taking the action to win."

An RMT rep at Shrewsbury said, "Last week's strike was solid. We had pickets out from Central Trains and Wales and the Borders, who have just joined the action."

"There were 27 people on the picket line and we had people not in the RMT refusing to cross."

Several striking guards told

*Socialist Worker* that the dispute has to draw the lessons from the 14-month Arriva Trains Northern struggle.

The company was eventually able to ride out one-day and two-day strikes.

The recent RMT train grades conference rallied to a call to escalate the guard's strikes. There is unevenness across the different companies.

"What we need is to build up a sense of solidarity," says one guard on Arriva Trains Merseyside. "That can build up the confidence of everybody to step up the action."

The RMT is discussing seriously upping the dispute, through action and campaigning, throughout May.

## Health workers

# Carnival time against the bosses

LOW PAID health workers at Scunthorpe, Grimsby and Goole hospitals took to the picket line in force again on Wednesday of last week.

The 400 porters, domestics, laundry and catering workers in North Lincolnshire are the latest group of health workers to take on the low pay, bullying and exploitation of their private contractor bosses.

They have now held three 24-hour strikes against private NHS contractors Carillion—or "Crapillion" as the workers call them.

"It was carnival time," reports porter and Unison union shop steward Joe Koper of last Wednesday's strike.

"There was an even bigger turnout on the picket lines than the previous strikes."

Some of us dressed up in monkey-suits, holding placards saying, 'I'm no monkey, don't pay me peanuts.'

"I think we've given management a bit of a shock. We're getting stronger."

Unison branch secretary at Scunthorpe General, Chris O'Sullivan says, "This is a strike of contracted out workers against exploitation in the NHS."

"They have no access to a pension or pay scheme. There is no access to formal training. There are regular breaches of health and safety."

"Our bosses are outrageous. Carillion are ringing up members at home trying to bully them into breaking the strike."

Carillion bosses and Unison reps were due to

meet on Tuesday of this week for negotiations.

"Unless we get something on the table then we will strike again this Thursday," says Joe.

"Our overtime ban is biting. There was overwhelming support from strikers to up the stakes and call a five-day strike next week."

Ancillary workers at hospitals in east London—Whipps Cross, Homerton, Mile End and St Clement's—are beginning an official Unison ballot this week.

Private firms ISS Mediclean and Medirest employ the workers.

Like the workers in Lincolnshire, they are fighting to get NHS pay, sick pay and pension rights.

The government is trying to squeeze those who work

for the NHS through its "modernisation" package of pay proposals, "Agenda for Change".

This will give health workers a miserly 2.3 percent pay rise, and leave many doing longer and more unsociable hours. But health workers are taking things into their own hands.

As Joe Koper says, "I hope trusts around the country are taking note of what is happening. If they needed an alarm call, this should be it. We won't put up with things any longer."

■ **Rush donations and messages of support to: Unison Office, General Hospital, Scunthorpe, North Lincs DN15 5BH. Make cheques payable to Scunthorpe health branch hardship fund.**

## TGWU elections

THE ELECTION for general secretary of the 900,000-strong TGWU union is set to be another major test of strength for both Tony Blair and the left in the unions.

Tony Blair will be hoping that the TGWU can become a bulwark against the rise of the so-called awkward squad of left wing union leaders.

The candidate most associated with Blair's project is Jack Dromey. Dromey is married to Blair's solicitor general Harriet Harman. There is a mood in the union to stop Dromey.

At hustings meetings around the country rank and file union members have argued that there should be one candidate to unite the left and stop Dromey. *Socialist Worker* has backed this call.

Sadly, two left wing candidates, Tony Woodley and Barry Camfield, have decided to stand. This creates a possibility that Dromey can win.

Tony Woodley defeated a more right wing candidate, Peter Booth, for assistant general secretary last June by 78,000 votes to 55,000. This vote showed the majority for the left could not sustain being divided between two candidates.

Both Woodley and Camfield have stood up against the war and both reject other aspects

of Blair's agenda.

But both have sold their members short in disputes over the years.

The key issue is to stop the right wing taking over the union. Uniting behind one left candidate would be the best way to do this.

Unfortunately every union member will have to choose between two left candidates.

On balance *Socialist Worker* believes Tony Woodley best reflects the disquiet union members feel towards the Labour government. We urge our supporters to back Woodley in the ballot, which begins next month.

But the key for the rank and file members of the TGWU union is to organise themselves to fight in their own interests, whoever wins the election.

□ **KEVIN CURRAN won the election for general secretary of the 700,000-strong GMB union on Wednesday of last week.**

Curran defeated his more left wing opponent Paul Kenny for the position. He only won by distancing himself from New Labour.

Throughout his campaign Curran was desperate to be seen as a critic of Downing Street.

## Postal workers

POSTAL WORKERS across Britain are voting on who should be their union's next deputy general secretary (postal).

It is important that John Keggie, the candidate supported by the Blairites in the union, is soundly defeated.

The central issue is, should the union work even more closely with the government and the employers, or should it be ready for confrontation where necessary?

Dave Ward, Keggie's opponent, says on his website, "I will not play with industrial action—when we ballot we will mean it. John Keggie and Royal Mail both know this to

be the case.

"That is why Royal Mail are allowing him to speak to members during worktime on a tour of 35 mail centres in their bid to get him re-elected."

Keggie denies he has been offered access to 35 sites. But there is no doubt that Royal Mail will cheer if he wins.

*Socialist Worker* has no illusions that Dave Ward is an ideal candidate. But he will be more open to pressure from the rank and file than Keggie.

Nor is Ward so utterly wedded to the defence of New Labour.

Votes must be in by 19 May with the result expected on 22 May.

## Zimbabwe solidarity



Around 200 people protested for human rights in Zimbabwe in Manchester last Saturday. London saw a similar protest

Picture: Richard Searle

## Firefighters

ACTIVISTS IN the Fire Brigades Union are finding deep opposition in stations and control rooms to their national leaders' attempts to push through support for a proposed settlement to the dispute.

There is a big groundswell of opposition not only in areas where delegates to last week's conference voted against the "Burchill proposals".

It is there in areas such as Scotland, where delegates voted for it.

The argument from FBU general secretary Andy Gilchrist and the majority of the executive at the conference was effectively against taking any more strike action.

"We are absolutely confident we are representing the feeling on fire stations," Linda Smith, London regional treasurer of the FBU, who opposes the deal, told *Socialist Worker*.

"That feeling has grown since we came back from conference. The message on stations is that people do not want to sell conditions for a 4 percent pay rise this year."

"There is weariness because the dispute has gone on so long with so many strikes called off in favour of useless talks."

"There is still resistance. We've now got to coordinate rejecting Burchill across the country."

"We can do that in brigades where officials are rejecting it."

But we have got to also have a mechanism to get to the rank and file in areas where the local officials back the leadership over Burchill.

"A lot of damage has been done. But we cannot leave the battlefield now."

"We've got until 12 May when the executive meets to finally accept Burchill to put enough pressure on to stop them doing so."

The employers have already summarily rejected the Burchill proposals because they do not give limitless power to local authorities and chief officers.

"Burchill is a negotiating position for the executive," says Neale Williams from the FBU in north London. "That means it will be negotiated down because the employers and the government are taking a hard line."

"Whatever comes out of negotiations held without action to put pressure on the government will mean an offensive by chief officers and employers."

"That, and the way our national leaders' strategy has failed, show the crying need for rank and file organisation that can deliver resistance to the employers."

■ **Red Watch, the rank and file paper for firefighters and control staff, has produced a special issue arguing for rejection of Burchill. To get copies phone 07973 521 594.**

Diary  
Upcoming  
events

**Saturday 26 April**  
● Manchester anti-racist day—march against the Nazi BNP, 10.30am, Castlefield Basin, Liverpool Road. Called by Unison. Rally and music 12 noon onwards, Albert Square. Concert in Apollo, 7pm onwards. For details go to [www.anl.org.uk](http://www.anl.org.uk)

**Sunday 27 April**  
● Mass anti-Nazi leafleting, 12 noon, Burnley Mechanics. Love Music Hate Racism gig, 3pm-11pm, Burnley Mechanics, with Basement Jaxx, Tim Westwood, Heartless Crew and others.

**Saturday 10 May**  
● Socialist Alliance annual conference, 10am-5pm, Islington Green School, London. For details phone 020 7791 3138 or go to [www.socialistalliance.net](http://www.socialistalliance.net)

**Saturday 17 May**  
● Free Palestine national rally, 1.30pm, Trafalgar Square, London. Called by Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

**Saturday 31 May**  
● Stop privatisation—the case for council housing. Defend Council Housing national conference, 11am-4.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Liverpool. Phone 07951 156 881.

**Sunday 1 June**  
● Mass demo at G8 summit in Evian, France, as part of week of protests and counter-conferences from Wednesday 27 May to Wednesday 3 June.



## National Union of Teachers conference

# A mood to stamp on SATs



A new generation of teachers is helping push their union to stand up to the government

Picture: Socialist Worker

THE NUT conference, which took place over Easter, revealed growing opposition to the government on every front.

Delegates representing local associations of the largest teachers' union voted unanimously for a ballot to boycott the SATs national tests for school children.

NUT general secretary Doug McAvoy captured the mood of teachers, especially those who voted Labour. He talked of "a creeping McCarthyism in government" and "a sinister lack of tolerance".

He warned "every trade union is threatened by this hostility and vendetta" from New Labour.

A clear majority of conference delegates also came out against the war and US-led occupation of Iraq.

**There was also anger and a pledge to strike over the funding crisis that is leading to threatened redundancies across thousands of schools.**

An emergency motion contrasted the "inadequacy in the funding of public services" to "the unlimited, ad hoc funding of military action in Iraq".

Conference delegates also voted to reject government moves to "remodel" the whole teaching profession by replacing teachers with classroom assistants in many cases.

Since New Labour was first elected in 1997 NUT leaders have tried to balance selective attacks on the government with calls to embrace New Labour as an advance on the Tories.

But in every debate at last

**KEVIN OVENDEN**  
reports from the  
**National Union of Teachers conference**

weekend's conference there was not one warm word for the government.

In the debate on boycotting the SATs tests, delegates spoke in anger at the damage that constant testing aimed at producing school league tables is doing to children.

They also voiced confidence that it is possible to beat the government on this issue.

Such a victory would blow a huge hole in the market-driven education policy New Labour has continued from the Tory years.

"We should be confident we can boycott the SATs next year and get rid of them," said John Wearty from Liverpool.

"Doing that will be a blow to the league tables and will transform teachers themselves. The day after you stand up to the bully, the world looks a different place.

**"That's what is at stake in this campaign. A new confident group of teachers and a new confident union is what we have to look forward to."**

The union is now resolved to launch a public campaign involving parents and school governors against SATs, which only exist fully in England.

The NUT is also to ballot to boycott the tests even if the other teachers unions, the ATL

and NASUWT, do not.

Many delegates thought the fight over the tests should already be under way.

Speakers in the conference spoke of how angry they were that the majority of the NUT executive had pulled back from boycotting the SATs this year.

There was loud applause when Andy Parsons from Nottinghamshire said the responsibility for children suffering under the tests this year lay squarely with the executive.

**He told them, "You have a moral duty to lead this action for next year."**

Sarah Finigan said, "Parents support us. I know that from petitioning over the issue in Croydon. We are lagging behind public opinion on SATs."

Feeling was so strong that the conference voted down an executive amendment that delegates thought could be interpreted to avoid calling a boycott ballot unless all the other unions agree.

That mood meant that executive members were at pains to promise that the campaign and boycott will take place. NUT general secretary Doug McAvoy gave journalists the same message.

The unanimous vote for the boycott left an overwhelming expectation in the hall that it will happen.

An impassioned 250-strong fringe meeting the night before had already called for a campaign conference against the tests, called by NUT associations with a view to building a boycott unofficially if the union's national leaders dare retreat.

## New targets flow from opposition to war

HERE WAS near unanimous support for a resolution which was critical of the war on Iraq and which called for solidarity with the Palestinians.

However, the bureaucratic committee that orders the agenda had removed large chunks from the motion that referred to taking a clear anti-imperialist stand and affiliating to the Stop the War Coalition.

Bernard Regan from Westminster, a member of the Stop the War Coalition steering committee, said in seconding the resolution, "We face the respect outlined by Donaldumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle and others of a new US century.

"In it, if their will is not obeyed by a state they will imply bomb them.

"There is talk of a road map for the Palestinians. But George Bush has said clearly that he backs Ariel Sharon. His government has given Israel \$10 billion in aid."

There were gasps of astonishment in the hall when executive speakers tried to claim that the NUT had led the opposition to the war as far as education unions are concerned.

In fact the NUT delegation to last year's TUC conference refused to support a resolution which unambiguously opposed war on Iraq. The lecturers' Natfhe union and the teachers' NASUWT delegations were among those who did vote for it.

The majority of NUT executive has also blocked discussion on affiliation to the Stop the War Coalition or backing

for demonstrations like the giant 15 February protest, on the grounds that it would be "outside the aims and objectives of the union".

The conference debate, however, showed most delegates want the union to be firmly part of the anti-war movement.

### Needs

A 230-strong Stop the War Coalition fringe meeting underlined that. Mary Compton, vice-president of the NUT, told the meeting it was "shameful" that the national union had abstained from opposing the war.

Lindsey German, national convenor of the Stop the War Coalition, outlined the way the US occupation of Iraq is opening it up for corporations such

as Bechtel, which is heavily involved in privatisation here.

Left Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn said, "The great achievement of the movement has been the politicisation of a new generation."

People left the meeting determined to continue organising against the warmongers in the White House and to take up arguments about what the US is doing with Blair's support.

Speakers raised three coming focuses: building big May Day protests over war and privatisation, supporting the demonstration called by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign on 17 May, and travelling to the counter-summit and demonstration in France when the G8 meets in Evian during the week of the summer half term.

## Strikes threatened over sackings

THOUSANDS OF redundancy letters are about to go out to classroom assistants, teachers, support staff and other school workers.

It is a result of inadequate funding and the crazy market mechanisms which make schools compete for it.

Pete Bishop, an NUT national executive member from Wirral, said, "In my area, out of 101 primary schools, 45 have declared redundancies. Out of 11 special schools, two have declared redundancies."

Kevin Courtney from the NUT in Camden explained why the government's claim to have increased funding to schools by 6.5 percent did not add up.

He said, "Our pay went up by 2.9 percent, the lowest in

the public sector. Increased employer national insurance contributions added another 1 percent to the pay bill.

"Pension contributions have gone up by over 5 percent. The total pay bill has gone up by 9 percent but funding went up by only 6.5 percent.

**"The money is not in our pockets. Taking account of inflation and our increased national insurance contributions, we are worse off."**

**"We should have no hesitation in pinning the blame squarely on the government."**

Determination to campaign to expose the funding crisis and to defend jobs in

schools united the conference.

Tony Brockman, who sits on the union's body that decides on industrial action, said, "This union will resist compulsory redundancies with the full strength of the national union.

**"We will have no hesitation in striking to stop them."**

Other speakers stressed the need to campaign nationally on the issue and not wait until redundancies are made and they are fought locally.

The funding crisis has thrown education secretary Charles Clarke, who refused to attend the NUT conference, on to the defensive.

## An electric meeting

SATURDAY NIGHT saw the most exciting fringe meeting at the NUT conference for years.

About 250 people packed into a room to discuss how to build a boycott of the SATs tests and to get the union to back it.

Among the speakers was John Illingworth, who is standing for general secretary of the NUT later this year.

His primary school in Nottingham was one of the last 11 schools to continue to refuse to do the tests when the NUT leadership called off its original boycott in 1994.

The enthusiastic response he got reflected the widespread feeling not only against what the government is doing but also for a new union leadership committed to action to oppose it.

The meeting was enthralled by children's author Pat

Tomson. She described the absurd questions on a SATs test based on one of her books.

"I failed the test," she said. "One of the reasons given was that I failed to understand the author's intentions."

Most of those who spoke in the meeting were delegates who rarely get a chance to speak in set-piece conference debates.

**The atmosphere inspired people to organise campaigning over tests in their areas.**

It also further convinced delegates from the established left of the union that there is a wider layer of teachers (often new to the job) who want to organise in an outward going way to push their union leaders to stand up to the government.

The conference also saw a packed 130-strong fringe meeting on fighting the BNP and racism in schools.

**GLOBALISATION, EMPIRE AND RESISTANCE**

**CONFERENCE Saturday 10 May 10am-5pm London School of Economics**

**SPEAKERS INCLUDE** Susan George, Samir Amin, Christophe Aguiton, Billy Hayes, Alex Callinicos, Medea Benjamin, Phillip Knightley

Organised by Globalise Resistance. Phone 020 7053 2071/2 or go to [www.resist.org.uk](http://www.resist.org.uk)

### Scottish TUC conference

## Labour roasted at STUC

THE GAP between the New Labour government and trade unions was strongly underlined at the Scottish TUC in Inverness last week.

Some of the strongest criticism of Tony Blair came over the war. A series of speakers condemned the government for taking Britain into the war.

Sandy Boyle, an STUC general council member, told delegates, "The war in Iraq was wrong when it started and it's equally wrong today."

He also criticised Helen Liddell, the Scottish Secre-

tary, who had told the conference earlier that the war could have been avoided if "the world community had stayed united".

To loud applause Sandy Boyle said, "Well, Helen, I agree with that.

"It's just a great pity that this policy was not adhered to by the British, American and Spanish governments who unilaterally broke the international consensus."

Boyle, deputy general secretary of the banking union Unifi, ended with a quote from a poem by

Robert Burns, which drew loud applause.

He said, "You hypocrites. Are these your pranks, to murder folk and give God thanks?"

Phil McGarry of the RMT rail union said he would "never forgive this Labour Party and this government" over the war and argued that Labour would suffer in the elections on 1 May.

The conference backed an executive statement calling for the withdrawal of British troops.

It also extended solidarity

to those members of the armed forces who refused to serve in the war as conscientious objectors.

The Scottish TUC also said that there must be no "carve-up of Iraq" for US and/or British corporations and that the country's resources, including oil, must be retained in the ownership of the Iraqi people and placed under their control as soon as possible.

The conference also bitterly criticised the government over its privatisation policies.

# Socialist Worker

## Protest stops BNP meeting in Liverpool... March in Manchester this Saturday

# MOBILISING AGAINST BRITAIN'S NAZI PARTY

**TRADE UNIONISTS and campaigners were set to march through central Manchester on Saturday in a united protest against racism.**

The demonstration and rally was called by the TUC and the Unison union, and backed by the Anti Nazi League.

It is a recognition of the danger posed by the British National Party (BNP), which has been targeting the north west of England.

The BNP has desperately been trying to appear "respectable" to con voters. It has five councillors in the area, and is standing its highest ever number of candidates in the 1 May election.

The BNP is still the same Nazi organisation that inspires hatred and attacks on black and Asian people.

The Manchester demonstration comes in the same week as the tenth anniversary of the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

He was killed in south east London near to where the BNP had their headquarters.

Saturday's march is part of the campaign to expose the Nazis' true face.

TUC president Brendan Barber and Unison general secretary Dave Prentis were due to speak at the rally, alongside GWU leader Bill Morris.

Bill Morris has been an outspoken critic of New Labour's savage policies against refugees.

**Trade unions have an important role to play in beating back the Nazis and challenging racism.**

This was shown last week in Liverpool when protesters successfully stopped the BNP from holding a meeting in a school on Wednesday of last week.

Delegations of trade unionists came to the 150-strong protest from the postal workers' CWU union, teachers from the NUT, Unison members from Sefton and Liverpool, lecturers in the AUT, rail workers in the RMT and Aslef, and the Merseyside TUC.

by HELEN SHOOTER

There were six union banners at the protest, which was organised at short notice.

BNP leader Nick Griffin had been due to attend the meeting at Anfield Comprehensive School.

He wanted it to be a high profile election launch for the BNP's candidate in the area, Joe Owens.

But the protest forced the meeting to be cancelled.

### Rally

"The response from the city was fantastic," reports Daniel Swain. "As the news filtered round the crowd that the meeting had been cancelled, the decision was made to hold a short rally, and then distribute anti-fascist materials throughout the area."

"The speeches were of victory, and the general mood was one of determination to smash the Nazis wherever they organise."

Many people were angry that the Liberal Democrats running Liverpool council had originally ruled that the BNP meeting should go ahead, claiming "councils have to treat all candidates equally".

But local campaigners understood the threat posed by the Nazis meeting.

Brian Campbell from the Anfield Parents Action Group said, "It is an absolute disgrace. Parents are not happy that the BNP is allowed to



Anti-Nazi activists stopped the BNP meeting in Liverpool last week

Picture: Daniel Swain

meet in a school."

The BNP was also defeated in its attempt to hold a meeting in the Bishop Reindorp School in Guildford on Wednesday of last week.

Members of the Anti Nazi League quickly called a protest.

The school authorities took a stand and refused to let the BNP's candidate for Stoke ward, Frank McAllister, hold a meeting there.

Such protests give confidence to local people to carry on opposing the Nazis.

In the remaining days before the election anti-Nazi campaigners in the north west and across Britain will be out leafleting people's houses

against the BNP.

They will also be protesting against any attempt by the Nazis to mobilise.

☐ **THE COMMITTEE to Defend Asylum Seekers** are collecting more signatures and

raising money on Saturday's march for their statement in defence of refugees, due to be published in the *Mirror* on Tuesday of next week.

For more details go to [www.defend-asylum.org](http://www.defend-asylum.org)

## Thugs after votes

**WHO ARE the BNP candidates who want your vote?**

● Nick Griffin, standing in Oldham. He got a two-year suspended sentence for distributing material likely to incite racial hatred.

● Mick Treacy, standing in Oldham. He has five convictions for violence, theft and handling stolen goods.

● Joseph Owens, standing in Liverpool. He served eight months for sending razor blades in the post to Jewish people in Liverpool in 1982. He was jailed in 1984 for carrying CS gas and knuckledusters.

● Steven E Belshaw, standing in Mansfield. He is a former member of the violent Nazi group Combat 18. He was convicted in 1993 for assaulting a lawyer.

● Kevin Scott, standing in Gateshead. He was convicted in 1987 for assault. He was convicted again in 1994 for threatening words and behaviour to a group of Asians.

● Mark Collett, standing in Leeds. He was exposed on BBC and Channel 4 programmes praising Hitler and using vile language against Jews.

## UNITE AGAINST RACISM MARCH IN MANCHESTER THIS SATURDAY, 26 APRIL

Assemble 10.30am at Castlefield Basin, Liverpool Road, rally at 12 noon in Albert Square  
Concert from 7pm, The Apollo. Bands include RDB, Chumbawamba, Un-Cut, Alabama 3  
Called by Unison and the TUC

Don't be without  
Socialist Worker

### From your newsagent

Dear newsagent  
Please could you reserve \_\_\_\_ copies of *Socialist Worker* every Thursday for:

Name .....

Address .....

Phone .....

ISSN 1475-9705. Newsagents: if you have problems ordering *Socialist Worker*, please phone 020 7538 3305

### Subscribe direct

Dear Socialist Worker Circulation Department  
I would like to subscribe to *Socialist Worker* for

☐ 3 months (£12) ☐ 6 months (£24)

☐ 12 months (£48)

☐ I would like \_\_\_\_ copies of *Socialist Worker* to sell

Name .....

Address .....

..... Postcode.....

Phone .....

### Special offer

Noam Chomsky's new book *Power and Terror*, free with all six-month and one-year subscriptions

Cheques/POs payable to Socialist Worker  
Socialist Worker Circulation Department,  
PO Box 82, London E3 3LH

E-mail [subscriptions@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:subscriptions@socialistworker.co.uk)  
Phone 020 7538 3305 for card orders



ISSN 1475-9705



